

Former Fire District Treasurer Gets Prison

(KNZA)--Two and a half years in a federal prison is the sentence handed down to the former treasurer of Mayetta Rural Fire District #1.

68-year-old Richard Bontrager, of Holton, learned his fate Monday.

He pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement, with Bontrager Monday ordered to pay more than \$427,000 in restitution to the fire district.

During his sentencing, U.S. District Judge Julie Robinson noted that Bontrager created a dangerous situation by depleting fire department funds that should have been used to purchase emergency equipment.

In his plea, Bontrager admitted that he began embezzling from the district in 2008, using forged checks made payable to a phony business he created. The checks were then deposited into his own bank account.

From 2008 to 2012, Bontrager made nearly \$427,000 in unauthorized transfers.

He also falsified loan documents obligating the district to monthly lease payments on a Polaris Ranger and a 1988 Chevy 1-ton brush truck. To make it appear legitimate, Bontrager created false minutes that showed the board approving the payments.

He was arrested last year following an investigation led by the Jackson County Sheriff's Department.

Many Signals Communications