

News headlines and quotes from officials from around the nation after the discovery of a local government embezzlement

Each organization, prior to the discovery, likely thought they were doing things well and they had adequate protection from their existing controls and annual audit.

At a minimum, a professional occupational fraud risk assessment from an independent expert will help you decide how to better protect your organization.

- ❖ Former Surprise employee stole \$836,000 (AZ Central.com, Apr 27, 2016) *Finance employee, \$836,000, over 8 years* - A Maricopa County grand jury indicted a former Surprise city employee on 15 counts relating to accusations of theft and fraud involving more than \$800,000 in city funds. A subsequent investigation by the city concluded Sanchez had stolen from the city for at least seven years. "It's pretty embarrassing for the city to have that happen right under our noses." - Councilman Roland Winters
- ❖ Ex-Kingman employee gets 9 years for embezzling \$1.1 million (dccourier.com, Oct 5, 2017) *Interim Finance Director, \$1,113,589, over 8 years* - Investigators found Richards allegedly misused a City of Kingman credit card to pay for her personal expenses from July 2007 through January 2015.
- ❖ Grand Jury Slams Santa Barbara County's Financial Management After \$2 Million Embezzlement (Noozhawk.com, June 24, 2018) *Finance Department Employee, \$2,000,000, over 9 years* - A Santa Barbara County Public Works Department accountant was able to steal about \$2 million over a nine-year period before getting caught last year, and a Grand Jury investigation of the county's financial management found "significant residual risks to the county's finances."
- ❖ Columbia County Sheriff's Office Employee Arrested after Embezzlement Investigation (iape.org, May 3, 2018) *Justice Department Employee, \$650,000, over 16 years* - "When Columbia County Commissioners realized that a long-term county employee was embezzling funds, we were shocked. Our first thoughts were, 'how could this person, this trusted employee of 30 years, do this? What kind of person can work in community justice – ironically an area that works to help make our community better – could be so selfish as to steal public funds.'" - Commissioner Alex Tardif

- ❖ Why was she hired? Was there oversight? Harrisburg school officials tightening controls after \$180K theft *Transportation supervisor, \$180,000, 2 years* (Pennlive.com, Mar 1, 2018) What can you buy for \$180,000? At the Harrisburg School District, it can pay the average annual salaries of nearly three teachers with 10 years of experience. "We were all shocked. Disbelief, disappointment. It was an overwhelming amount of emotion." – Kristen Keys, District Spokeswoman

- ❖ Former Prichard city employee charged with stealing more than \$100,000 (Fox10tv.com, Feb 8, 2018) *Mayor's Chief of Staff, \$106,000, unknown duration* - "As Mayor of the City of Prichard, it is with great concern that the trust of our citizens was eroded by an employee of my office." – Mayor Jimmy Gardner

- ❖ Clark County Employee Fired Following Fraud Investigation (Lex18.com, May 23, 2018) *Emergency Management Employee, \$11,551, over 3 years* - "It's very frustrating because it's a position of trust whenever you're over the financial aspects of any office or any department. This is tax payer money," - Clark County Sheriff Berl Perdue."

- ❖ Former Briarcliff fire chief pleads guilty to embezzling more than \$120,000 from the fire department (lohud.com, July 2, 2018) *Fire Chief, \$120,000, over 4 years* – "After he resigned, new oversight was put in place... This is a reminder to employ strong checks and balances and internal controls to guard public funds." - Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli

- ❖ Ex-Shakopee superintendent charged with embezzlement (startribune.com, Nov 14, 2017) *School Superintendent, \$30,000, over 6 years* – Thompson ignited the ire of parents and community members in March, shortly after he notified staff of a \$4.5 million budget shortfall, which he blamed on "human error." News coverage and community outrage led to his June resignation — about a month after police launched a criminal probe. "At the end of the day we're all losers." - Carrie Ferris, an active member of FACT: Friends & Concerned Taxpayers of Shakopee

- ❖ Audit finds former city worker stole \$350,000 (stamfordadvocate.com, June 30, 2010) *Benefits coordinator, \$350,000, over 8 years* – "What's amazing to me is that he was able to do that, and it was able to continue with relative impunity. To amass that amount, to me that's really startling." – Mayor Michael Pavia

- ❖ Casey city clerk burned down city hall to cover fraud (desmoinesregister.com, Nov 18, 2015)

- ❖ Township Clerk Accused of Embezzling \$250K (phillymag.com, Apr 6, 2018) *Clerk, \$264,577, over 5 years* – “Whether you are a business or a government agency, you are vulnerable to fraud. You must have strong oversight and robust systems in place to prevent theft. Valley Township was victimized by this trusted employee, acting merely to amuse herself, and now the taxpayers will foot the bill.” – Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan

- ❖ Former Strongsville City Schools employee indicted for stealing high-priced items, including a barn (news5cleveland.com, May 15, 2018) *Maintenance Foreman, \$65,000, 5 years* - “This man was shameless. He treated the school district like his exclusive personal home improvement store – a new home generator, a utility shed, a furnace, air conditioner and water heater. Nothing was off limits, apparently,” – State Auditor Dave Yost.”

- ❖ (citizen-times.com, May 1, 2018) *Madison County, NC, Clerk of Court, \$108,000 – several years*. “The employee worked here at the courthouse for 21 years, having been employed by the previous two clerks prior to working in my office.” – Mark Cody, Madison County Clerk of the Superior Court

- ❖ (firehouse.com, June 12, 2018) *Diamondhead Fire Protection District, MS – Office employee, \$69,000* – A Kiln woman had worked for the Diamondhead Fire Protection District for 18 years when she was accused of embezzling.

- ❖ (mohavedailynews.com, Feb 6, 2018) *Topock School District, AZ, \$236,000, 5 years* – “The reputation of the school and its staff has been damaged and there is a chasm in the community. School staff haven’t seen a raise in the three years since the investigation began.” – Teacher John Barney

- ❖ (kyma.com, Mar 2, 2018) *Calexico, CA \$600,000* – “This comes at a time when the city is laying off employees and asking others to take pay cuts. We’re definitely going through a hard time financially. When you hear these things it hurts. It hurts to feel that anybody could be skimming off the top or anything like that, specifically an employee,” – Council Member Armando Real.

- ❖ (pasadenastarnews.com, Nov 30, 2016) *Pasadena, CA, \$6,400,000* – It wasn’t the amount stolen that bothered him. It was how long it went unnoticed. “The fact that this guy was able to get away with it for more than a decade, that’s the part that is staggering,” - Mayor Terry Tornek