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**Former Fortune Bay Casino Sentenced to Prison for Embezzling More Than \$300,000**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – A St. Louis County woman was sentenced today to eight months in prison followed by one year of supervised release and full restitution for embezzling more than \$300,000 in Tribal funds.

“Ms. Boutto took advantage of the managerial position she had been trusted with and selfishly stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa,” said Acting U.S. Attorney W. Anders Folk. “This brazen theft of Tribal funds deeply impacted the Tribe’s ability to provide services to its own members. Today’s sentence signals the seriousness of Ms. Boutto’s crimes.”

“Far too often crimes are committed against tribes in Indian Country and the punishment is a slap on the wrist,” said Bois Forte Tribal Chairwoman Cathy Chavers. “We applaud Judge Tostrud for realizing the seriousness of the crime committed. Boutto serving time in federal prison reinforces the fact that crimes like these won’t be tolerated.” Chavers went on to say, “we are relieved to put an end to this matter and are now able to breathe a bit easier seeing justice done. Now our community can begin the process of healing and ensuring this never happens again.”

According to court documents, in 2008, Jennifer Lynn Boutto, 33, began working as a reservationist at the Fortune Bay Resort Casino, which is owned and operated by the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. Boutto later received a promotion to Front Desk Supervisor, a position that allowed her to issue cash refunds without direct supervision. Between January 2013 and October 2019, Boutto used her position at Fortune Bay to steal money by issuing false cash refunds against the invoices of previous Fortune Bay customers. Boutto would then access the Fortune Bay vault and retrieve the falsely refunded amount. In total, Boutto executed the scheme 2,994 times and stole \$315,739.87.

On March 9, 2021, Boutto pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement and theft of Tribal funds.

Acting U.S. Attorney W. Anders Folk for the District of Minnesota made the announcement after U.S. District Judge Eric C. Tostrud sentenced the defendant.

This case is the result of an investigation conducted by the FBI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, with significant assistance from the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordan L. Sing.

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