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MADIGAN: ROCKFORD AREA WOMAN SENTENCED FOR STEALING \$1 MILLION FROM WIRTZ BEVERAGE

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a Rockford area woman pled guilty and was sentenced to four years in prison for stealing more than \$1 million from Schaumburg-based Wirtz Beverage.

Linda Bessert, 49, of Winnebago, pled guilty earlier today in Winnebago County Circuit Court to theft of more than \$500,000. Judge Rosemary Collins sentenced the defendant to four years in the Illinois Department of Corrections and two years of mandatory supervised release.

While employed by Wirtz as an office manager in the company's Rockford location, Bessert processed customer payments and was responsible for sending those deposits to the bank by armored car. Bessert stole cash from deposits totaling \$1,058,293 over a six-year period, from July 2004 to October 2010.

"Based on the evidence, it was clear that Bessert had devised and executed a scheme to steal an extraordinary sum from her employer, and for that, it is only right that she be held accountable," Madigan said.

Madigan brought the case based on an investigation and referral from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant Attorney General Anshuman Vaidya handled the case for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau.

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