



## State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

For Immediate Release: Jan. 6, 2011

### **Former Mason Employee Pleads Guilty to Stealing Almost \$100,000 from the Town**

A former employee for the Town of Mason pleaded guilty this week in Tipton County Criminal Court to theft, fraud and misconduct charges.

Arnita Mitchell was indicted on several felony charges in 2009 after an investigation by the state Comptroller's office uncovered an embezzlement scheme that lasted for nearly 30 months. State auditors were alerted to potential problems with the town's finances when irregularities were discovered in its annual financial audit.

Upon further investigation by the Comptroller's office, auditors discovered that Mitchell separately accounted for cash collections at city hall that were not included with the regular bank deposits she prepared. When questioned by state auditors, Mitchell admitted to taking several hundred dollars a day, two to three days per week, for 30 months. Her total theft was estimated at \$96,961.

Mitchell pleaded guilty Wednesday to theft of property over \$60,000, computer fraud over \$60,000, forgery and official misconduct - all of which are felonies. She was ordered to serve 90 days in jail, pay restitution to the town and was placed on probation for eight years.

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Media contact: Blake Fontenay, Communications Director, (615) 253-2668 or [blake.fontenay@tn.gov](mailto:blake.fontenay@tn.gov)

[Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury](#)  
State Capitol Nashville, TN 37243  
Phone: (615) 741-2501  
Email: [comptroller.web@tn.gov](mailto:comptroller.web@tn.gov)