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## **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, July 29, 2011  
[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN)

### **Business manager for Chokio-Alberta School District pleads guilty to stealing approximately \$275,000**

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court, the business manager for the Chokio-Alberta School District pleaded guilty to stealing approximately \$275,000 from the district. Liane Claassen, age 43, of Chokio, specifically pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud in connection to the crime. She was charged on May 2, 2011, and entered her plea before United States District Court Judge John R. Tunheim.

In her plea agreement, Claassen admitted that between July of 1999 through August of 2010, she used the district's computer to pay herself more money than her salary allowed. As the district's business manager, Claassen was responsible for payroll for all district employees and was entrusted to authorize bank transfers. Claassen also admittedly illegally transferred money into her retirement account and covered up her scheme by making misrepresentations to her employers regarding the district's financial condition.

For her crime, Claassen faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Tunheim will determine her sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christian S. Wilton.

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