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**FORMER NASA ACCOUNTANT SENTENCED FOR THEFT**

*Stole Almost \$150,000; Was a Fugitive for Six and a Half Years*

**Greenbelt**, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. sentenced Tracey Carpenter, age 39, of Suitland, today to one year in prison followed by three years of supervised release for theft of government property arising from her embezzlement of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) vendor payments, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to her guilty plea, Carpenter was an accountant at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. To enable her to process payments to NASA vendors, Carpenter was given a unique password and access to NASA's accounting database through which monies were electronically disbursed to vendors.

From August 1997 to July 1998, Carpenter stole at least 10 vendor payments totaling approximately \$148,321. She altered vendor account information forms to substitute her personal bank account information for the vendors' as the deposit destination. Carpenter then processed invoices submitted by vendors to make it appear as though monies were being paid to these vendors. In fact, however, Carpenter caused the monies to be deposited into her personal bank account. To avoid being detected, Carpenter moved funds earmarked under older contracts and doctored the records submitted to certifying officials. At sentencing today Judge Williams enhanced her sentence for abuse of position of trust, specifically finding that she worked independently, and that NASA had trusted and relied on Carpenter to accurately disburse funds to vendors.

The indictment was returned in 2001. Carpenter was a fugitive from 2001 until her arrest on November 2, 2007.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the National Aeronautics and Space Administration - Office of Inspector General for its investigative work and commended Assistant United States Attorney Gina Simms, who prosecuted the case.