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Jun. 21, 2013

When Barbara Gail Mayhew fell sick and was hospitalized in October, Gum Spring United Methodist Church in Gum Spring, Virginia, listed her among the congregation's homebound.

Now, fellow employees at an Ashland marketing firm, who cooked meals for Mayhew and wished her well, are hoping she's jail-bound.

"We treated her like family; she was totally trusted in every way," said Adams Marketing Associates Inc. CEO Ken Adams, who founded the company some 30 years ago with his wife, Betty Joe, who is now president. The firm does millions of dollars in business annually supplying the federal government with office supplies worldwide.

But now, Mayhew, 55, the firm's accounting manager and longtime employee, is charged with embezzlement, and Adams is determined to spread the word that businesses need to take every precaution to protect their assets.

"It's hard to express the amount of disappointment and anger we feel that someone, especially Bobbie, would do this," said Adams, using Mayhew's nickname.

"We hope she spends a lot of time behind bars," added Adams, who said he and his wife have lost most of their retirement savings because of the alleged theft of what he said are hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"Everyone with the company is affected," he said of the firm's 16 employees. "We've had to increase the employee share of health insurance, stopped giving raises, laid people off and my wife and I are working without a salary."

Mayhew was arrested this year only to be released on an unsecured personal

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company financial records are destroyed after several years, he isn't sure how much actually may have been taken.

Another woman in the Ashland area is facing embezzlement charges linked to thousands of dollars taken from the Ashland Little League. And Goochland residents are more than familiar with the conviction two years ago of former treasurer Brenda Grubbs, who is serving four years in prison for sending about \$200,000 in county funds to an online boyfriend overseas.

Hanover authorities declined to comment on the case, but Adams said investigators and auditors he hired established fraudulent transactions exceeding \$500,000 dating back nearly eight years.

The company's regular audits failed to uncover the alleged theft, he said.

The October illness Mayhew suffered, though, helped spill the beans.

"When she went on sick leave and was in the hospital is when the person who filled in uncovered what had been going on," Adams said. "We couldn't believe it. From that point on, the amount that we were able to determine that had been taken just kept getting bigger. It's been a huge blow to all of us."

One hour has been set aside for trial Aug. 12.

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