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sentenced Tuesday for embezzling more than \$400,000 from a Greensburg accounting firm to buy scratch-off lottery tickets.

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A Mt. Pleasant, PA, bookkeeper will spend nearly one year in jail after she was sentenced Tuesday for embezzling more than \$400,000 from a Greensburg accounting firm to buy scratch-off lottery tickets.

Joyce M. Markiewics, 47, pleaded guilty to theft and forgery charges for writing 97 bogus paychecks over a four-year period that started in 2006 while she worked at Wilder & Co.

According to court records, Markiewics used her husband's name to create a fake employee who was routinely paid with company checks.

Police said Markiewics forged her husband's name on the checks and deposited the money into a bank account. Markiewics' husband was not implicated in the thefts.

Markiewics worked for the company for 20 years, according to her lawyer.

She used the stolen money to pay for her gambling habit, she told the judge. Markiewics claimed she was addicted to scratch-off Pennsylvania Lottery tickets, according to court records.

In court on Tuesday, David Muchoney, a partner with the accounting firm, asked that Markiewics be sent to state prison. The company has had to take out large loans to keep the business afloat, he said.

"The financial loss at our age is devastating. We will be paying down these loans for years to come," Muchoney said.

Judge Debra A. Pezze ordered that Markiewics serve a sentence of one year, less a day,

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