

For the record

Woman pleads guilty to theft

From staff and wire reports

An Oak Ridge Toyota employee pleaded guilty Tuesday to stealing money from the Lynchburg car dealership over nearly two years.

Michelle Marino Tyree, 36, of Madison Heights, was convicted of three counts of embezzlement for the theft of nearly \$2,500.

Tyree, who had worked at the dealership for about five or six years, told police she had developed a cocaine habit and had been stealing money when customers came in for car repairs, and then repaying it from her own paycheck, Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Chuck Felmlee told Lynchburg Circuit Judge Mosby Perrow.

This year her addiction became more than she could afford, which is why she couldn't repay the money, he said.

Tyree's supervisor discovered the missing money when she noticed that an invoice hadn't been paid. Tyree told her it was because the car had not yet been picked up, Felmlee said. When the supervisor later checked, she noticed that the car was not in the lot.

Tyree then told her the car had been picked up, but that she had given the person more time to pay the bill. When the supervisor asked if that's what the customer would say if she called, Tyree confessed to taking the money, Felmlee said.

Tyree faces up to 20 years in prison on each charge when she is sentenced Dec. 16.