

District Attorney Marc Bennett  
18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Kansas



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**WICHITA, KAN.** – A former employee of a local mechanical contracting company was sentenced to probation for stealing more than \$300,000 in copper piping from work and then selling it to scrap yards.

Matthew Belshe, 42 of Wichita, a former employee of Kruse Corporation, entered a plea to two counts of felony theft. Belshe was accused of unlawfully using funds from his employer to order copper piping, which he then sold to scrap yards. Belshe sold copper piping to the scrap yards for almost four years, from April, 2014 to November, 2017, before the theft was discovered and prosecuted.

Judge Bruce Brown told Belshe on Friday that he could serve 26 months in prison if he failed to be successful on probation, which requires him to make regular payments on the restitution. Representatives of the Kruse Corporation agreed to probation in the case. The total loss in the case was \$338,778.58.

As part of his probation, Belshe must not consume alcohol or drugs. He also was ordered not to participate in gambling and enter into and remain on the Kansas Voluntary Exclusion Program for people with gambling problems through the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission.

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