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Plea bargain reached in embezzlement case **Keihin Aircon's former controller, accused of stealing \$167,000, would face a maximum 60-day jail term if the plea agreement is accepted.**

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MUNCIE -- A former official at Muncie's Keihin Aircon North American plant, accused of embezzling \$167,000 from his employer, will face up to 60 days in jail if a judge accepts the terms of a pending plea bargain.

Jon M. Price, 42, 5008 N. Holborn Drive, pleaded guilty on Thursday to two counts of forgery, both class C felonies carrying standard four-year prison terms.

Delaware Circuit Court 3 Judge Robert Barnet Jr. took under advisement a plea agreement that calls for five other class C felony charges -- four counts of forgery and one count of theft -- to be dismissed.

The plea bargain also calls for the sentences Price receives for the two forgery convictions to be served at the same time, with the total time spent in jail not to exceed 60 days.

Price would also be allowed to serve his jail time in Randolph County, where he is reportedly employed.

When Price was charged in October 2005, authorities said he had written unauthorized checks on the account of Keihin, a Japanese-based manufacturer of air-conditioning units for Honda, between August 2003 and August 2004.

Investigators said Price laundered the stolen money by depositing it into the accounts of youth sports leagues he was associated with.

At the time of his arrest, authorities noted Price had purchased a motor home, a mower and golf clubs during the time he was accused of embezzling the money.

However, Deputy Prosecutor Mark McKinney said Thursday that authorities now believe Price used some of the money in question for purchases made on behalf of Keihin, but without authorization.

McKinney said attorneys for Keihin and Price had negotiated a restitution total that was less than the \$167,000 originally alleged to have been stolen. A substantial amount of that money has been repaid, he said.

The two forgery charges Price pleaded guilty to refer to two checks, written in late 2003, for \$775 and \$950, respectively.

Price is being represented in the criminal case by Indianapolis attorney Bradley Williams and Muncie lawyers Thomas Malapit Jr. and Kelly Bryan.

Barnet tentatively set a sentencing hearing for Feb. 8. If the plea agreement is not approved, Price's guilty pleas would be withdrawn and the case would be reset for trial.
