Travel agent arrested for bilking customers

Wednesday, September 5, 2012
A local travel agent was arrested on 38 counts of theft for taking money from customers but failing to make their travel arrangements, said Caddo Sheriff Steve Prator.

Gretchen Anderson, 41, of the 6500 block of Jefferson-Paige Road, was arrested Tuesday by Caddo Sheriffâ€™s Detective Frank Edmondson following an investigation by the Caddo-Shreveport Financial Crimes Task Force.

Anderson owns Gretchenâ€™s Travel Agency and works part-time at the business. Between 2011 and 2012, she took $31,700 from customers for three different trips but didnâ€™t use the money to pay for the trips. She later cancelled the trips for various reasons but did not refund the money.

The first trip was a Carnival Cruise for 16 people that was to leave in November 2011.Anderson collected about $13,000 for the trip.She contacted Carnival Cruise and booked the rooms but did not pay for them.

The second trip was to Hawaii for 15 people who were to leave in June 2012.Anderson collected $14,500 but did not make any reservations for hotel or airline tickets.

The third trip was for a cruise for seven people that was to leave in October 2012.Anderson collected $4,200 for this trip but did not make any reservations for the cruise.

Anderson told investigators that she used the money to pay bills and other living expenses.