

Iowa Pipeline Explosion Lawsuit Settled

HINTON, Iowa (AP) — A construction company and a natural gas pipeline owner have settled a lawsuit filed after a northwest Iowa pipeline explosion nearly a year ago.

Omaha, Neb.-based Northern Natural Gas Co. had sued DeRocher Construction, of Le Mars, for negligence. Northern sought more than \$439,000 in damages.

Officials say the April 25 blast near Hinton occurred after two DeRocher workers who were using machinery to install drainage tile struck the underground pipeline, rupturing it. They ran and escaped fatal injury before it erupted into a fireball.

The Iowa Attorney General's Office in August fined DeRocher \$20,000 for failing to call Iowa One Call to have underground utility lines located before digging.

The companies have delayed court proceedings while final settlement details are worked out. Spokesmen for both companies declined to comment.

Source URL (retrieved on 03/07/2015 - 12:25am):

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