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## San Pat man settles in silicosis lawsuit

Retired sandblaster agrees to receive \$650,000; company happy with settlement

By NAOMI SNYDER  
*Caller-Times*

A San Patricio County man settled a silicosis lawsuit Friday against an Indiana construction company, in the midst of jury deliberations for a verdict.

Harrell Horton is a 67-year-old retired sandblaster who accused Lone Star Industries of responsibility for his lung disease called silicosis. He agreed to take \$650,000 from the company, said his lawyer, Houston attorney Jason Gibson.

In total, Gibson said he collected \$2 million for his client, who had sued and set-

tled with other companies in the sandblasting industry, accusing them of knowing the sand used in sand blasting damaged lungs.

Lone Star's lawyer Jim Ware said he was happy with the settlement in the 347th District Court in Nueces County. He said Lone Star had questioned whether Horton had used the company's product and when Horton himself knew about his illness.

A key question in the case was whether Horton knew he had silicosis in 1998, which would mean the statute of limitation for filing his lawsuit had run out.

"If it's a good settlement, everyone's a little happy and a little sad," Ware said.

Lone Star's other attorney did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Gibson said Horton traveled around Texas during his career, sandblasting between 1958 and 1973.

He said Lone Star didn't warn people its sand was harmful until 1976, and that warning was inadequate.

"I didn't ever know it could hurt me," said Horton, who has difficulty breathing. "I think it should be banned."

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