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Huntley crash victims are awarded \$6.5 million

From Staff Reports

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Almost exactly two years later, \$6.5 million was awarded in a wrongful death lawsuit to the family of a woman killed in a crash on Halloween day 2008.

Tabitha Carroll, 32, of East Dubuque, was killed Oct. 31, 2008, on Route 47 near I-90 in Huntley. Carroll and her family were on their way to visit Goebbert's Pumpkin Patch when Jeffrey Repec, of Spring Grove, rear-ended the pick-up truck in which Carroll was riding with her husband, Randolph "Randy," and 3-year-old son, Gabriel. Police determined that Repec was under the influence of marijuana when the crash occurred.

The settlement, awarded on Friday in a Kane County courtroom, includes \$4.7 million for the wrongful death of Carroll, \$1.5 million for her husband's injuries and \$300,000 for her son, according to a press release from the family's attorneys, Levin & Perconti.

The judge found Repec, who was driving a tractor trailer for a local farm, rear-ended the Carroll vehicle at high speed. The pickup truck was pushed into a stopped IDOT truck, police reports said. Tabitha Carroll was pronounced dead at the scene.

Randy, who now lives in Woodstock with Gabriel, suffered multiple injuries including a broken spine, facial fractures and respiratory failure. Gabriel suffered two broken legs, head injuries and lacerations.

The lawsuit, filed in January 2009, alleged that Repec was operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs, driving over the speed limit and failed to keep a proper lookout. Repec pleaded guilty to aggravated driving under the influence of drugs and is serving a 45-month sentence in the Jacksonville Correctional Center.

In the course of the lawsuit, it was discovered the owners of the tractor-trailer, Geils Farms, violated the law by not randomly conducting drug tests of their drivers, performing background checks on drivers or obtaining a copy of each driver's driving record, according to the press release. Additionally, the farm was found in violation of federal regulations by operating an overloaded semi, which weighed more than 80,000 pounds at the time of the crash, it said.

Further, after the collision, it was found that truck's left rear turn signal was inoperable, five of the 10 brakes were out of adjustment, and some of the truck's brake pads were contaminated by oil or grease, making the vehicle inadequate for braking and safe stopping, the press release said.

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