

Children get \$1.6 million for father's cancer death

United Press International
BEAUMONT — The U.S. government, B.F. Goodrich Chemical Co. and nine other companies have agreed to pay \$1.6 million to six children of a former Goodrich employee who died of bladder cancer.

Albert D. Bourgeois Sr., of Port Neches, died in 1979 at the age of 47. He had been an employee of Goodrich between 1959 and 1968. His family contended that Bourgeois was exposed to phenyl butanaphthalamine, an antioxidant better known as PBNA.

Bourgeois' wife, Jo Ann, also died of cancer, but attorney Walter Umphrey said it could not be proved that her death was related to the production of rubber at the plants.

He explained that the Goodrich plant was one of several synthetic rubber plants built in Jefferson County in the early 1940s after the Japanese captured the Dutch East Indies and Indochina, cutting off America's main source of natural rubber. The plants used a U.S. government formula for synthetic rubber, which included PBNA.

Studies conducted in the early 1900s indicated that when PBNA is absorbed into the human body it changes into another substance that the body cannot get rid of, Umphrey said. Later studies showed that PBNA often causes bladder cancer 16 to 20 years after exposure.

The plants stopped using PBNA more than 10 years ago. Bourgeois' survivors, who range in age from 12 to 23, filed

suit, but the settlement was reached just before a jury was to be selected earlier this week.

The settlement calls for \$120,000 to be split among the children immediately, as well as an immediate payment of \$120,000 to the Bourgeois estate. Each child is also to get \$20,000 every five years for the next 20 years and \$80,000 in the year 2007.

Umphrey will be paid \$60,000 immediately, plus \$31,250 a year for eight years.

The money will be paid by the federal government, Goodrich Chemical, Atlantic Refining Co., the B.F. Goodrich Co., E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., Gulf Oil Corp., Gulf Oil Chemicals Division, Monsanto Co., Neches Butane Products Co. and Phillips Chemical Co. They all provided products used in the making of synthetic rubber.

Prisoner stabbed; refused to testify in warden murder

United Press International
HUNTSVILLE — A prison inmate who refused to testify on behalf of a prisoner charged with killing a warden was stabbed in his cell, a Texas Department of Corrections official said.

Joe Bailey Peacock, 42, received several superficial stab wounds in his back during the attack in his cell at the Ellis Unit in Huntsville last week, TDC spokesman Jay Byrd said Tuesday.

Peacock is the second inmate to sustain knife wounds after refusing to testify in the trial of Eroy Edward Brown, charged in the murder of Ellis Unit Warden Wallace Pack.

State District Judge Henry Dalehite of Galveston held Peacock in contempt Feb. 15

when he refused to testify in Brown's trial.

Peacock had told Dalehite he would not testify "without proper protection."

The Brown trial ended in a hung jury.

Peacock was among 10 inmates held in contempt for refusing to testify on grounds that either TDC guards or inmates would seek revenge against them.

Byrd said Peacock has refused to cooperate with prison officials investigating last Wednesday's attack. No charges have been filed, he said.



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Getting acquainted

staff photo by David Fisher

Olivia Belle, daughter of Buddy Belle, was out with her father and made a new friend with this Sheltie, and kissed the dog.

Seven killed in tunnel when truck explodes

United Press International
OAKLAND - A tanker-truck carrying 8,800 gallons of gasoline jackknifed and exploded in flames inside a heavily traveled highway tunnel early Wednesday, killing seven people.

The accident occurred shortly after midnight in the tunnel connecting Oakland and suburban Contra Costa County. The California Highway Patrol said the identities of the victims were not immediately known.

Witnesses said six to eight cars were caught inside the west-bound lanes of the Caldecott Tunnel on the east side of the San Francisco Bay when the truck apparently swerved to avoid a transit bus, then exploded.

Fire teams and rescue workers, kept out of the tunnel by the

heat and heavy black smoke billowing out the east end, were allowing the flames to die down before advancing on the fire.

The truck, carrying gasoline from a Richmond, Calif., refinery, was traveling alongside an Alameda-Contra Costa County transit bus when the bus ran into a stalled car and careened into the truck, the CHP said.

The tanker, swerving to avoid the bus, hit the side of the tunnel, flipped over and exploded.

The bus, nearly split in half, continued out of control, without its driver, and slammed into a pole outside the west end of the tunnel.

David Williams, heading to his Concord, Calif., home, said he saw the bus, "coming out of the tunnel out of control" and hitting the pillar.

Small explosions could still be heard in the tunnel two hours after the accident, witnesses said.

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