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U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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PATTERSON-UTI DRILLING AGREES TO PAY \$45,000 TO SETTLE EEOC RACIAL HARASSMENT LAWSUIT

Native American Repeatedly Harassed at Colorado Drilling Rig, Federal Agency Charged

DENVER – Patterson-UTI Drilling Company, LP, LLLP, will pay \$45,000 and furnish other relief to settle a racial harassment lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, *EEOC v. Patterson-UTI Drilling Company, LP, LLLP*, 07-cv-02034 WYD-CBS, a Native American, employed from July through November 2005 as a floor hand or "rough neck" on a drilling rig in Gilcrest, Colo., was subjected to harassment based on his Native American race.

The EEOC alleged that the man, a Dakota Santee Sioux of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Band of Eastern Sioux from the Spirit Lake Tribe in North Dakota, was subjected to a workplace fraught with racial slurs and derogatory comments reflecting negative stereotypes of Native Americans, including calling him derogatory names. The EEOC further alleged that the victim's work was hyper-scrutinized by his supervisor, who also made repeated negative comments to the victim in an effort to "run him off."

The EEOC's lawsuit claims that the victim complained repeatedly to management but Patterson took no action. Rather, the harassment continued.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, as well as retaliation for complaining about such discrimination. Under the settlement, Patterson will pay the victim \$45,000 and for three years will provide annual training for all of its Colorado employees on prohibited racial discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

"Racial name-calling and harassment in the workplace is unacceptable, whether you dress up and work in a cubicle in an office setting or work in the great outdoors in oil-soaked overalls punching holes in the ground," said Mary Jo O'Neill, regional attorney for EEOC's Phoenix District, whose jurisdiction includes Colorado. "Native Americans are a historically underserved and forgotten population, and the EEOC will not stand by and watch their rights being violated."

EEOC Denver Field Office Director Nancy Sienko added, "Employers should be on notice of their responsibility under federal law to take appropriate action to prevent and correct racial harassment. EEOC investigators and trial attorneys are committed to eliminating all such unlawful comments and behavior."

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.



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