

June 26, 2008

Jurors return verdict of \$176,000 in trial seeking \$7.3 million against Sarasota County

Jurors in the case brought by Water Equipment Service, Inc. (WES) against Sarasota County, engineering firm BDI and Kurt Jensen returned a verdict in a case seeking \$7.3 million for breach of contract. The verdict, which comes 23 days after the trial began June 9, awarded to WES \$176,000 from the county and \$1.2 million in damages from engineering firm BDI and Kurt Jensen.

The award to WES is substantially lower than the \$7.3 million that WES had originally sought in damages for its contract claim over incomplete work in the Phillippi Creek Septic System Replacement Program, and significantly below what the county offered to settle before the trial.

"We are very pleased with the result on behalf of Sarasota County," said Deputy County Attorney Rick Elbrecht. "This is well below the plaintiff's jury demand."

The claim arose from a dispute between WES and Sarasota County over work to replace aging septic systems in Phillippi Creek. In June, 2006, the county replaced WES with a different contractor after WES stopped work in the area.