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1 message

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Tue, Oct 19, 2010 at 7:48 AM

Woman awarded \$4.52 million after tree falls on her
By SARAH SUTSCHEK - ssutschek@nwherald.com
NW Herald Oct. 18, 2010

LAKEMOOR – A Lakemoor woman has been awarded \$4.52 million in what her lawyer believed to be a record payout in Illinois for a tree-falling case.

Cathy Stackhouse, 60, lived in a trailer home that backed up to Lakemoor Country Club's golf course property.

On April 26, 2008, she was walking her dog when a 67-foot cottonwood fell on her, fracturing one of her ankles and a vertebra, her attorney, Tom Popovich said.

Two years earlier, about 5 feet away from the tree that fell on her, another tree had fallen. Stackhouse did not see anything wrong with it, so she asked the country club superintendent to look into why the tree fell because of concerns that another one would fall.

An investigation revealed that the first tree to fall had a fungus that caused it to rot, and that the second tree had been infected, Popovich said. Had there been an appropriate tree inspection policy, the second tree would not have fallen on Stackhouse, the plaintiff argued.

The defendants, Lakemoor Country Club Inc. and Royce Realty & Management Property Inc., said that Stackhouse had been trespassing on golf course property at the time of the incident.

During the course of the trial, the defendants offered \$1 million to settle the case, but Stackhouse's last settlement demand was \$2 million.