

THE TIMES

NORTH LAKE COUNTY EDITION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27,

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Man thought to be Gacy victim alive

FAMILY REUNITED WITH BROTHER AFTER HE WAS FOUND IN FLORIDA. READ MORE ON PAGE A2.



HUNT FOR MUSHROOM SEASON'S BEST BEGINS

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DeMotte couple awarded \$7.7M

Doctors: Man suffered permanent traumatic brain injuries after '07 crash on Cline Avenue

BY STEVE ZABROSKI
Times Correspondent

HAMMOND | A DeMotte man injured in a 2007 multivehicle accident and his wife were awarded \$7.7 million in

damages Tuesday by a Lake Superior Court jury.

The jury deliberated for two days before its decision following three weeks of testimony in Judge Diane Kavadias Schneider's courtroom.

Jim Stovall, then 35, was on his way to work as a general foreman for pipe fitting at the BP Whiting Refinery when a speeding tractor-trailer slammed into the back of his pickup truck on Cline Avenue in the early morning hours of Nov. 14, creating a chain reaction involving four vehicles.

The father of five suffered permanent post-concussive traumatic brain injuries in the collision, according to doctors with the Neurological Institute and Specialty Centers of Merrillville. He has been unable to work since the accident.

Truck driver Karl Kopanke and Michigan firms Universal Am-Can Ltd. and M C Schmitt Trucking Inc. were found liable for compensatory damages of \$6.24 million to Stovall, and \$1.5 million in compensatory damages to his wife.

"It was a fair and just verdict,"

said attorney Andrew Crosmer, partner in the Dyer firm Rubino, Ruman, Crosmer, Smith, Sersic & Polen, who represented the Stovalls along with Terrence Rubino and Richard Long.

The jury was the hardest-working he had ever dealt with, Crosmer said, asking questions and taking notes, and deliberating longer than in any case with which he had ever been involved.

With continuing treatment and therapy, Stovall has a chance to reclaim some of his life, Crosmer said, but right now, "our thoughts and prayers are with the family."

Damages

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