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Wage Recovery Sets Record in 2006

Topeka, KS — The Kansas Department of Labor recovered more than \$1.9 million in unpaid wages for Kansas employees in 2006. The department received 1,411 wage claims in 2006, including a claim for 166 former employees of the A.O. Smith Corporation's manufacturing plant in Parsons.

"I am proud of the work our staff has done to investigate wage claims and help recover unpaid wages for Kansas employees," said Jim Garner, Kansas Secretary of Labor.

The A.O. Smith employees received a total of more than \$950,000 in back wages, penalty and interest in a decision by the Kansas Court of Appeals. The A.O. Smith decision is the largest single wage recovery since the enactment of the Kansas Wage Payment Act in 1973.

The former employees said they did not receive a year's earned vacation wages upon the plant's 2001 sale. The Kansas Department of Labor initially ruled in favor of the employees. That decision was appealed to the district court, which upheld the missing wages but reversed the penalties. The issue was then appealed to the Kansas Court of Appeals and the Labor Department's order was reinstated. A.O. Smith's request to appeal the decision to the Kansas Supreme Court was denied and payment was made for the employees' vacation pay, penalty and interest.

Employees who believe they have not been paid all the wages to which they are entitled should contact the Kansas Department of Labor at www.dol.ks.gov.

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