

Ironworkers guilty of conspiring Must pay \$290G to non-union erectors

By Christine McConville | Saturday, September 5, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> |

Ironworkers Local 7 took a hit in federal court this week when a jury found that the South Boston labor union conspired with contractors to keep non-union steel erectors off four job sites in Massachusetts.

The jury has ordered Local 7 to pay the two non-union plaintiffs \$290,000 in damages.

Plaintiff Glen Pisani, president of the Wrentham steel erector DFM Industries, called the five-year fight “a long and difficult journey.”

But, he added, “the result is that America still stands for free enterprise and fair competition.”

Yesterday, Local 7 Business Manager Michael Durant said the union will fight the verdict.

“The claim that Local 7 threatened fabricators in order to secure boycott agreements was simply not proven at the trial,” Durant said in a written statement.

“This union will continue to make every effort to secure work for our members with fair, living wages and health and pension benefits. Any suggestion that these efforts have been unfair or illegal is simply not true. Local 7 intends to pursue all avenues of appeal,” he added.

Several years ago, DFM and Ajax Construction Co. of Harrisville, R.I., accused Local 7 of persuading contractors who had already hired them to reverse their decisions.

They said Local 7 used its job target fund to entice employers to hire unionized subcontractors, and violated a section of the National Labor Relations Act, which prohibits a union and an employer from conspiring together not to do business with another company.

The DFM and Ajax case is part of a broader legal dispute, in which independent contractors say Local 7 improperly spent \$16 million in employee-generated market recovery funds to entice businesses to hire union ironworkers.

Local 7 is fighting that charge, too.

“No court in the country has ever found that the use of market recovery funds violated anti-trust laws,” Durant said.

