

Spence Law Firm LLC: Jury Awards Wyo. Woman \$28.2 Million in Poisoning Case

Written by Australian Business

JACKSON, Wyo., Dec. 27, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- A Wyoming federal court jury awarded \$28.5 million to a Casper, Wyo. woman who was poisoned by carbon monoxide from an outdated and unmaintained furnace in her apartment, [The Spence Law Firm](#) said today.

The legal team for Amber Lompe from The Spence Law Firm, of Jackson, Wyo., alleged that the Sunridge Apartments owner and manager ignored warnings that the complex's 30-year-old fleet of 96 furnaces was dangerous and needed to be maintained or replaced. Wyoming law requires landlords to provide tenants safe housing, including safe and working heat.

Ms. Lompe was poisoned by her furnace in 2011, causing a permanent brain injury that affects her memory, concentration, processing speed, attention, and multi-tasking. She has also suffered from chronic headaches and sleep problems related to the brain injury. Unable to work and attend college as before the injury, she will require numerous medications and other treatment for the rest of her life, doctors testified.

On Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Alan Johnson entered the judgment of \$2.7 million in compensatory damages and \$25.5 million in punitive damages against defendants Sunridge Partners, LLC and Salt Lake City-based Apartment Management Consultants, LLC, which manages apartment complexes in 13 states.

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Lompe was represented by [Tyson E. Logan](#) , and [G. Bryan Ulmer](#) , of The Spence Law Firm, LLC, of Jackson, Wyo.

Tyson E. Logan said, "The jury's verdict here sends a message that in Wyoming, we expect more from landlords. We won't allow businesses to put profits over people, where people's lives are at stake. I hope this verdict will make all of our communities safer in the future."

The three-week trial included evidence that Sunridge apartment tenants were not warned after maintenance employee suffered carbon monoxide poisoning and was sent to a hospital emergency room in October 2009. The trial also included allegations that incident photos and witness statements were altered, fabricated, or destroyed as part of a cover-up during the litigation. The furnace from Ms. Lompe's unit also disappeared, her lawyers said.

Carbon monoxide causes 50,000 emergency room visits a year and more than 1,000 accidental deaths each year in the United States. Trial testimony showed that approximately half of the Sunridge apartments did not have functional carbon monoxide detectors when Ms. Lompe was poisoned.

Bryan Ulmer said, "These companies knowingly risked their tenants' lives, refusing to provide safe, working furnaces in the apartments. The jury worked hard, for three weeks, and they discovered the truth. This verdict will help Amber to get the medical treatment and support she will need for the rest of her life."

The case is "Amber Nicole Lompe v. Sunridge Partners, LLC, et al," Case 2:12-cv-00088-ABJ in the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming in Cheyenne.

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