

Ohio Edison was negligent in accident, jury rules

BY ELIZABETH HALLOWELL
Beacon Journal staff writer

A Summit County Common Pleas jury on Wednesday found Ohio Edison negligent in a March 1989 accident that left one man dead of electrocution and three others injured.

The jury, which deliberated a day and a half, found the utility 60 percent responsible for the death of James Thompson Jr., who was killed when he and other workers installing siding on an industrial building at 1566 Firestone Parkway in Akron rolled a 25-foot scaffold into 13,000-volt power lines.

The jury found Thompson's own negligence to be 40 percent responsible for his death.

The jury will return today to decide how much in compensatory damages Thompson's widow, Danna, should receive.

The injured workers who joined in the lawsuit were Geoffrey Hogan, Christopher Pearl and Steve Shelton.

The jury determined that Ohio Edison was responsible for 90 percent of Pearl's injuries, 75 percent of Hogan's injuries and 60 percent of Shelton's injuries.

Hearings on individual damages have been scheduled throughout the summer and fall.

The jury absolved Rustgo Co., the manufacturer of the scaffolding, from liability. Danna Thompson and the others claimed that Rustgo was negligent in not insulating the metal scaffolding.