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GCR Tire Centers reaches settlement agreement with US Labor Department's MSHA in Alabama quarry retaliation case

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration announced today that it has reached a settlement with GCR Tire Centers regarding the termination of an off-road tire technician who had complained about unsafe work practices at the Notasulga Quarry in Lee County, Ala.

The agreement resolves a formal discrimination complaint that MSHA filed in court on behalf of the employee, after the agency's investigation determined that the company fired the employee in retaliation for reporting safety concerns.

"Federal law and safe mining practices require that employees be free to file a complaint without fear of retaliation when they see unsafe working conditions," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "This settlement reaffirms those principles."

Approved by the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission's Office of Administrative Law Judges, the settlement requires the company to pay an undisclosed amount in compensation to the employee and provide training within 120 days of the approval of the settlement to GCR employees on the applicable sections of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Surface Transportation Assistance Act.

GCR agreed not to retaliate against the employee and will not disclose information related to this action to any prospective employer. The company also will delete all references to the circumstances involved in this matter from the worker's employment records and provide a neutral job reference.

GCR Tire Centers is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, the world's largest tire and rubber company.

Under Section 105(c) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, miners, representatives of miners and applicants for employment are protected from retaliation for engaging in safety and/or health-related activities, such as identifying hazards, asking for MSHA inspections, or refusing to engage in an unsafe act.

For more information concerning MSHA's efforts to protect miners' safety and health, visit <http://www.msha.gov>.

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