

Woman wins suit over firing

By Lisa Coryell
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TRENTON — A jury yesterday awarded \$150,000 for lost wages and emotional distress to a saleswoman who was fired after filing a sexual harassment complaint against a co-worker at a Hightstown adult entertainment distribution company.

After a two-week trial, jurors took about four hours to decide that East Coast News owed Doreen Longo compensatory damages for firing her in 2006. The jury will reconvene at 9:30 today for a trial on punitive damages against

East Coast News and its owner Frank Koretsky.

Longo's attorney Andrew Dwyer said he was pleased with the award.

"This is exactly what we were hoping for," Dwyer said. "The jury has vindicated my client and awarded appropriate damages."

In a discrimination and hostile work environment suit against East Coast News and its affiliated Pleasure Productions and International Video Distributors, Longo said her bosses ignored her repeated complaints that a co-worker was sexually harassing her

and threatening her with violence.

Longo filed a formal complaint with corporate higher-ups in February 2006 and was fired two months later. She testified that her bosses told her she was being let go because she had lodged the complaints.

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In a countersuit, the company accused Longo of breach of contract for alleging taking a job with a direct competitor, soliciting vendors from her former company and revealing trade secrets of her former company.

Those complaints were dismissed at the end of the trial.

During the trial the defense sought to portray Longo as a poor employee who disregarded company policies, engaged in inappropriate interactions with customers and fabricated the harassment she complained about.

"The jury found our explanation of what occurred was the truth," Dwyer said. "They rejected the other side's explanation."

Dwyer said the jury's decision is a step toward making the workplace safer for employees.

"I want to create a world where you can complain about something and no matter what happens, you won't be punished for it," he said.