

EEOC TAKES STRONG STANCE: RETALIATION COSTS AUTOMOTIVE GROUP \$50,000



"Dealin' Doug" Moreland Automotive Group have landed themselves in a legal soup after a woman, Lucille Fancher alleged that the group fired her for her participation in an earlier EEOC sexual harassment lawsuit. She was part of a lawsuit that accused the company of fostering a sexually hostile environment, which the company had agreed to settle. Lucille Fancher, a ten year employee, was to receive a portion of the settlement. She went ahead filed another complaint with the EEOC and the company in settlement, is now having to shell out the maximum, according to size, \$50,000.. According to EEOC, prior to settling of the first lawsuit, of which she was a part, she had been summoned by the general manager who had told her that if she accepted her share of the settlement, she would have to exit from the company and would no longer have a job here. The EEOC further charged that on June 3, 2008, on the day that the settlement documents were to be presented in federal court, Fancher was fired, while another employee who did not accept her share of the settlement was not. Laws regarding retaliation are rather stringent and EEOC takes them very seriously. Retaliation for participating in an EEOC lawsuit violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The law states that companies employing less than 101 employees could be made to pay a maximum of \$50,000. To add insult to injury the company must post a copy of the decree on the workplace notice-board for all other employees to read and provide training to employees on anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation laws, and also send periodic reports to the EEOC. "If companies are allowed to retaliate against employees just because they report harassment or offer testimony, or participate in the settlement of an employment discrimination claim, then we cannot expect people to speak out against injustice," said Regional Attorney Mary Jo O'Neill of the EEOC's Phoenix District Office. "If people can't speak out, then discrimination remains unchecked," she concluded. Three companies which are part of the "Dealin' Doug" Moreland Automotive Group have agreed to pay \$50,000 to settle the EEOC lawsuit. EEOC Denver Field Office Director Nancy Sienko added, "We hope this settlement will serve as an example to all employers that this agency takes retaliation seriously and will vigorously protect people's rights to challenge discrimination."