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## **Whitman Professionals Provide Expert Testimony in Jacksonville Exxon Case, Helping Plaintiffs Recoup \$150 Million in Compensatory Damages**

### ***Whitman Quarterbacked Technical Testimony for Trial***

Two senior professionals of Whitman, New Jersey's premier environmental, engineering and management firm, were instrumental in helping a group of residents of northern Baltimore County, Md., recoup \$150 million in compensatory damages from a gasoline leak that occurred at a nearby Exxon Mobil Corp. gas station in 2006. Along with expert testimony about the nature of the area's fractured bedrock geology provided by Whitman's Director of Hydrogeology Edward Sullivan, Whitman Principal Ira Whitman coordinated the technical reports from seven different industry professionals and presented that information to the plaintiffs' attorneys and the jury during trial.

Exxon Mobil, after discovering a leaking gasoline pipe at the site about 10 miles outside of the Baltimore Beltway, initiated an investigation into the extent of the contamination, collecting soil and groundwater samples and performing remediation work. The data collected by Exxon formed the basis of the expert reports at trial. Sullivan's overall expertise in fractured bedrock – a geological formation that is prevalent along the East Coast – was instrumental in determining how far the contamination would spread.

“We made a decision early on to use Exxon's data and not our own to avoid getting into an argument about whose data was better or more accurate,” Whitman said. “The information we provided and (Sullivan's) solid technical understanding of the geology of the area was extremely important in convincing the jury that all of the homes in the affected area – about a one mile radius surrounding the site of the leak – had the potential to experience gasoline in their wells, even if that hadn't happened yet.”

In all, about 90 families were compensated for the loss of value to their homes. Exxon was also required to pay for current and future health screenings for area residents and the emotional distress caused by the spill – which totaled 26,000 gallons of gasoline. While the nature of the expert reports was very technical, Whitman was able to present the findings in layman's terms, helping educate the jury about the nature of the contamination and the potential for future damages.

“Providing expert testimony is a natural complement to the work we do for our clients, including remediation of soil and groundwater. It's also a way for us to broaden our relationship with lawyers and law firms,” Whitman said. “For every one case that we consult on that is brought to trial, there are about 10 that are settled out of court, so being able to provide this testimony in a public setting was a very rewarding experience.”

Though the court case has been settled, cleanup efforts at the site continue with 87 wells drilled throughout the affected area pumping groundwater to remove any contaminants, which have spread to groundwater and vaporized into the soil. Exxon estimates that it has spent \$38 million to remediate the site, work which could continue for a decade or longer.

#### ***About Whitman***

Whitman is New Jersey's leading full-service environmental, engineering and management firm, offering expertise in brownfield redevelopment, civil and geotechnical engineering, site assessment, remediation cost recovery, indoor air quality solutions and innovative remediation technologies. Since its founding in 1985, the East Brunswick, N.J.-based company has performed more than 2,500 site assessments, remedial investigations and remediation designs for all types of development and redevelopment projects, including commercial, retail and residential properties in more than 12 states. Whitman has secured more than \$30 million in state and federal reimbursements for environmental work for their clients. Whitman is one of the largest full-service firms in the state, providing expertise in all areas of environmental and engineering services.

For more information on Whitman call 732-390-5858 or visit [www.whitmanco.com](http://www.whitmanco.com).