

\$1.8M in State Construction Dispute

M&R Mechanical Contractors Inc. v. Ernest Bock & Sons Inc.: The state paid \$1.825 million to a general contractor in a construction dispute.

M&R Mechanical Contractors of Highlands sued general contractor Ernest Bock & Sons Inc. of Philadelphia for \$800,000 for air-conditioning work at the State Police Technology Center in Hamilton Township. The AC unit maintained a controlled environment at the center, which processes and stores forensic evidence.

The contractor filed a third-party complaint against the state in Mercer County Superior Court, claiming it was due \$2.36 million in unpaid fees. The state refused to pay because it said the unit failed to perform to specifications, requiring outlays of \$1.5 million for temporary and replacement equipment, says the contractor's lawyer, **John Palladino of Hankin Sandman & Palladino** in Atlantic City.

M&R's claim was dismissed in February 2010 for failure to provide discovery and to obtain counsel.

After mediation by **Ray Falls**, of Neshanic Station, the state agreed on Feb. 27 to pay Bock \$1.825 million. The payment was made on May 5.

The state was represented by Deputy Attorney General **Wayne Martorelli**, who was away from his office and unavailable for comment.

— **By Michael Booth**

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