

# Injury at casino may net USD 1 million

A quarter plunked into a video poker machine in May 2002 could turn into USD 1 million for an Alton woman, her lawyer said Friday.

It wasn't because she hit the jackpot but because, in a sense, the jackpot hit her.

Ameristar Casino in St. Charles agreed this week to pay that amount to settle Robyn Smith's personal injury suit, according to her lawyer, Jody Pravecek of Chicago. The settlement of the suit, in U.S. District Court at East St. Louis, is not yet official, she said.

Smith's husband, Robert Wilson, inserted the coin that night, but it fell through to the coin return. When he reached to get it, the front panel of the machine, roughly 20 pounds of metal, fell off and landed on Smith's foot, Pravecek said. The casino had failed to properly latch the panel, the lawyer said.

V. Scott Williams, a St. Charles-based lawyer for Ameristar, confirmed there was an agreement to pay Smith but would not discuss damages because he believed the terms were confidential.

Smith, through Pravecek, declined to comment. She and Wilson have divorced, Pravecek said.

Smith's foot swelled after the accident, and she was diagnosed with „complex regional pain syndrome,“ described in a medical dictionary as a nerve disorder that causes extreme pain at the site of an injury. Smith remains in intermittent pain, Pravecek said. She would not provide the newspaper documentation of Smith's injuries, citing confidentiality of

medical records.

Pravecsek said Smith has undergone a series of injections and also had an electronic implant to stimulate her spinal cord.

But her award far dwarfs the payouts typically paid by video poker machines in Missouri, said Clarence Greeno, a state gaming enforcement manager.