



# Locals hope Supreme Court decision means battle with BP is winding down

By Will Robinson-Smith

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BALDWIN COUNTY, Ala. (WALA) – The sign on the door by Phillip Colquette’s work shed is the last remains of his publishing company. There was a time not too long ago that you would’ve seen that on the cover of your local yellow pages. Now, not so much.

“After being the publisher for 15 years, that was one of the reasons that we lost our contract cause we could not meet our sales objective that year. And honestly, I don’t see how anybody could’ve made their sales objective that year,” Colquette said.

The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig nearly five years ago had a huge impact for Colquette. Many of his clients were along the beachfront and nearly 200 page of ads seemed to vanish in an instant. It was a blow to his bottom line that wasn’t sustainable for business.

“When they’re looking at paying their electric bill or paying for an ad in the telephone directory, they pay their electric bill,” Colquette said.

Back in 2012, Claims administrator Patrick Juneau spoke in Mobile and said that there were many people who should be receiving claims under the settlement, but like Colquette, weren’t getting paid.

“There are a ton. A ton of claims that were declared ineligible under the prior process that according to my reading of the settlement are eligible in this process,” Juneau said.

However, the Supreme Court ruled on Monday that British Petroleum is responsible for paying out on all the claims that were correctly filed according to the settlement, which was upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on January 10 of this year.

It’s something that both accountants who have been helping local clients and lawyers who have fought for this decision are pleased to hear.

“This is one battle in a series of many that have been fought in this entire process, but we’re hoping that this may be towards the end. But yeah, I think it’s definitely a positive thing,” Matt Taylor, of Grant, Sanders & Taylor, said.

“I hope that it is the end of this attempt by BP to rewrite history and really make them stand by their word, you know, stand by their contract,” Rhon Jones, a member of the Plaintiffs Steering Committee worked on the settlement agreement, said.

As for Colquette, he just hopes that it’ll finally mean he can get what’s owed to him.

“I just wish the folks at BP would just use a little bit of common sense and say maybe we ought to take care of the people in Baldwin or South Baldwin County first since we were the ones that were most impacted by this,” Colquette said.

The next court appearance for BP will be next month when it’ll be decided if they have to pay up to \$18 billion in Clean Water Act penalties.