

[Cite as *LaBounty v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.*, 2006-Ohio-7203.]

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

CHARLES J. LABOUNTY	:	
Plaintiff	:	
v.	:	CASE NO. 2006-01858-AD
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	:	<u>MEMORANDUM DECISION</u>
Defendant	:	

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :

FINDINGS OF FACT

{¶ 1} 1) On January 20, 2006, at approximately 7:00 p.m., a van owned by plaintiff, Charles J. LaBounty, was traveling on State Route 613, one mile east of State Route 500, in Paulding County, when the vehicle struck an uprooted road reflector laying on the traveled portion of the roadway. The reflector caused tire and rim damage to plaintiff's van.

{¶ 2} 2) Plaintiff filed this complaint seeking to recover \$116.46, his expense incurred for repairing his vehicle. Plaintiff asserted he incurred these damages as a proximate cause of negligence on the part of defendant, Department of Transportation, in maintaining the roadway. Plaintiff paid the filing fee.

{¶ 3} 3) Defendant has denied liability based on the fact it had no knowledge the defective condition existed prior to plaintiff's incident.

{¶ 4} 4) Plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to indicate the length of time the loosened road reflector was on the roadway surface prior to the January 20, 2006, property damage occurrence.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

{¶ 5} 1) Defendant has the duty to keep the roads in a safe, drivable condition. *Amica Mutual v. Dept. of Transportation* (1982), 81-02289-AD.

{¶ 6} 2) Defendant must exercise due care and diligence in the proper maintenance and repair of highways. *Hennessy v. State of Ohio Highway Department* (1985), 85-02071-AD.

{¶ 7} 3) In order to recover on a claim of this type, plaintiff must prove either: 1) defendant had actual or constructive notice of the defect (uprooted reflector) and failed to respond in a reasonable time or responded in a negligent manner, or 2) that defendant, in a general sense, maintains its highways negligently. *Denis v. Department of Transportation* (1976), 75-0287-AD.

{¶ 8} 4) There is no evidence defendant ad actual notice of the damage-causing reflector.

{¶ 9} 5) The trier of fact is precluded from making an inference of defendant's constructive notice, unless evidence is presented in respect to the time the defective condition (uprooted reflector) appeared on the roadway. *Spires v. Highway Department* (1988), 61 Ohio Misc. 2d 262.

{¶ 10} 6) In order for there to be constructive notice, plaintiff must show sufficient time has elapsed after the dangerous condition (loosened reflector) appears, so that under

the circumstances, defendant should have acquired knowledge of its existence. *Guiher v. Dept. of Transportation* (1978), 78-0126-AD.

{¶ 11} 7) No evidence has shown defendant had constructive notice of the damage-causing reflector.

{¶ 12} 8) Plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to prove the roadway was negligently maintained.

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CHARLES J. LABOUNTY :

Plaintiff :

v. :

CASE NO. 2006-01858-AD

OHIO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION :

ENTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE
DETERMINATION

Defendant :

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : :

Having considered all the evidence in the claim file and, for the reasons set forth in the memorandum decision filed concurrently herewith, judgment is rendered in favor of defendant. Court costs are assessed against plaintiff. The clerk shall serve upon all parties notice of this judgment and its date of entry upon the journal.

DANIEL R. BORCHERT
Deputy Clerk

Entry cc:

Charles J. LaBounty
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Plaintiff, Pro se

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For Defendant

5/24

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