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1905 SHERMAN ST., SUITE 245, DENVER, COLORADO 80203 ◀ 303-292-1212 ▶ www.lawweekcolorado.com

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cover **STORY**

Biggest Verdicts Of The Year

2008 Cases Range From \$2M To \$14.3M

By Neela Eyunni and Peter Rossi
LAW WEEK COLORADO

DENVER — Law Week Colorado examined the top 10 monetary jury verdicts in the state from 2008. The figures were significantly down from 2007 (see accompanying story on page 5), but there were still some big victories. The largest verdict of the year went to Holland & Hart's Jane Michaels, who secured \$14.3 million for an oil and gas company with a patented drilling technique that was infringed upon.

Special thanks to Sally Gilbert and Jury Verdict Reporter of Colorado for providing Law Week Colorado with the top verdicts and accompanying information used for the summaries.

1. National Oilwell Varco v. Pason Systems USA **\$14.3 million**

The No. 1 verdict was awarded to an oil and gas company for a whopping \$14.3 million.

Represented by Jane Michaels of Holland & Hart, with Houston attorneys, John Raley, III and Robert Bowick, and former Holland & Hart associate, Ryan Bergsieker, plaintiff National Oilwell Varco ("Varco") successfully defeated defendant Pason Systems USA Corp. in early November. The jury trial was in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado before Judge Richard Matsch.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANE MICHAELS

Jane Michaels, a partner at Holland and Hart, helped secure the largest verdict of the year.

Counsel for plaintiff contended that the defendant willfully infringed a patent for automatic drilling.

The inventor, Bobbie Bowden, patented a new technology for drilling horizontally and directionally into oil and gas wells, using drilling fluid pressure to control the rate of release of the drill pipe into the drill hole.

The new method increased efficiency and significantly reduced the time and expense of drilling directional wells.

In 2003 the defendant, Pason Systems, began marketing a similar automatic drilling system: the AutoDriller. Plaintiff's attorneys asserted that the AutoDriller infringed several claims of the Bowden patent, which is owned

by Varco.

The jury found in favor of the plaintiff, awarding lost profits in the amount claimed by Varco as damages: \$14,320,283. The jury also found that the defendant's infringement was willful.

On April 30 of this year, Judge Matsch denied Pason's Motion for Judgment as a Matter of Law and its motion for a new trial.