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Metro Could Net \$878,589 from Win in Suit Against Subcontractor

- A jury award of \$102,863 could be tripled to \$308,589; civil penalties could add \$570,000

By DAVE SOTERO

(Feb. 28, 2006) Metro has won a legal victory that could net the agency up to \$878,589 in damages and civil penalties against a subcontractor accused of submitting false claims under a construction contract involving several Metro Red Line stations.

A Los Angeles Superior Court jury found, Feb. 23, that Reno Metal Products, Inc., had knowingly presented or caused 57 false claims to be presented to Metro for work performed at the Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood stations after the contract was awarded in 1999.

The jury awarded Metro \$102,863 for the 57 false claims. Under the California False Claims Act, the monetary damages may be tripled to \$308,589.

An additional civil penalty may be imposed up to \$10,000 for each false claim. Since the jury found that Reno submitted 57 false claims, Metro could also recover an additional \$570,000 in civil penalties.

The hearing for the penalty phase is scheduled for March 21.