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News Release

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W.A. Drew Edmondson, Attorney General

Computer Memory Chip Companies Settle Price-Fixing Case

Attorney General Drew Edmondson and 32 other state attorneys general have entered into an agreement with six manufacturers of Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) computer chips to settle concerns the companies conspired to inflate prices.

DRAM chips are common form of memory found in desktop and laptop computers, servers, printers and networking equipment.

The states accused the companies of a scheme to artificially inflate the price of DRAM chips. The states' investigation discovered that, over a four-year period from 1998 to 2002, the companies exchanged confidential information and agreed to quote inflated prices to customers.

"Companies like Dell, IBM and Hewlett-Packard buy more than \$5 billion of these chips each year," Edmondson said. "When manufacturers are forced to pay artificially-inflated prices for components they in turn pass those costs on to the end purchaser."

Nationally the settlement is valued at \$173 million. The settling companies will make payments, plus interest, over two years. How the money will be divided among the participating states has yet to be determined. Oklahoma's share of the settlement will be used to reimburse governmental entities that paid the inflated prices.

The settlement also requires the companies to refrain from price-fixing and to conduct employee-compliance training.

Participating in the settlement are American companies Micron Technology, Inc. and NEC Electronics America, Inc. Foreign companies in the settlement are Infineon Technologies A.G. of Germany; Hynix Semiconductor, Inc. of South Korea; Mosel-Vitelec Corp. of Taiwan, and Elpida Memory, Inc. of Japan, as well as the companies' American subsidiaries.

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