

Family Of Leonel Rondon, Killed In Merrimack Valley Explosions, Settles With Columbia Gas

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LAWRENCE (CBS) – The family of [Leonel Rondon](#) announced Tuesday it has settled with Columbia Gas, nearly 10 months after the deadly [Merrimack Valley explosions](#).



Leonel Rondon (Facebook photo)

Rondon was the only person killed in the gas explosions. He was sitting inside an SUV in the driveway of a friend's house on Chickering Road when the explosions [caused a chimney to crash down](#) onto the car.

Terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

“He was only 18 years old and full of life. He loved science and had a passion for music. He dreamt of going to college and cared for his family members in every way possible. His mother, Rosaly, described Leonel as ‘the happiness of the house,’ Rondon family lawyer Doug Sheff said in a statement. “The family can only hope that this kind of catastrophe will never happen again. Nothing can replace the loss of Leonel and the Rondons will continue to cherish his memory, his loving support and positive impact on his family and community.”



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Bruins
The Figueroa home on Chickering Road in Lawrence exploded Sept. 13, 2018. The chimney crushed an SUV, killing Leonel Rondon. (WBZ-TV)

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Columbia Gas and parent company NiSource have agreed to set up a scholarship fund in Rondon's name.

"We remain heartbroken over the tragic loss of Leonel Rondon and again express our deepest sympathy to his family and to the entire community," said NiSource CEO Joe Hamrock in a statement. "We recognize the pain that remains and understand that nothing we can ever say or do will bring Leonel back to his loved ones or erase that pain. Since this tragic event, we have always wanted to do the right thing for the Rondon family and all of those affected, and we are pleased to have reached this settlement. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Rondon family to honor Leonel."

Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera addressed the settlement with reporters and renewed his call to take away Columbia Gas' license.

"My concern is that the Rondon family feels they were made whole. If there's a thing that you can do to compensate for the loss of a loved one, I don't know if that's possible," he said. "At the end of the day, this should have never happened."

Also on Tuesday, Merrimack Valley leaders gave an update on how local businesses are getting back on their feet since the explosions.

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New Hampshire police officers took a peacock into custody after they saw it was "terrorizing" residents for several days.

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