

\$950,000 for dad's injuries

By SHANNON P. DUFFY

Times Correspondent

PHILADELPHIA — Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. has agreed to pay \$950,000 to an Upper Darby man who was severely injured when one of its tire rim assembly units exploded in his face.

James Pettyjohn, 34, a father of four, lost his left eye, most of the teeth in the left side of his mouth, and injured his left hand and arm in the June 7, 1989 accident. At the time he was working for Buck's Garage at the CSX Railyard on Delaware Avenue in Philadelphia repairing tractor trailer tires.

His lawyers contended that Goodyear's multi-piece rim assembly was unsafe because it had exploded many times before, sometimes killing workers.

Goodyear, they said, invented a safer, single piece rim assembly in 1955, but continued to market the multi-piece unit even though it knew it was unsafe.

Pettyjohn has had 15 reconstructive surgeries to repair the left side of his face, with more surgeries to go.

Pettyjohn's lawyer, William Myers, said that if the case went to trial, he would have asked for punitive damages. Goodyear, he said, allowed an unsafe product to stay on the market despite "scores of deaths and hundreds of injuries."

But even though the settlement is less than he might have won from a jury, Myers said Pettyjohn is "very satisfied because it provides for his family for many, many years to come."