LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Car dealership Randall Ford in Fort Smith, Ark., will pay $128,750 as part of the settlement of a disability discrimination lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

The EEOC's lawsuit challenged Randall Ford's treatment of a used-car manager when the company refused to accommodate his disability following surgery on his spine. Among other things, the manager had asked permission to make greater use of a cart that he and other employees already used from time to time. Instead of making such accommodations, Randall Ford fired the manager a few days later.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is unlawful to deny a qualified individual with a disability a reasonable accommodation, and it is also unlawful to fire such a person because he needs an accommodation. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC. v. Randall Ford, Inc., Civil Action No. 2:13-CV-02206) in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Fort Smith Division, after first attempting to reach a voluntary pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The former employee joined in the EEOC's suit and was represented by Joe D. Byars of Fort Smith.

In addition to requiring the company to pay $128,750 in damages and back pay to the former manager, the consent decree resolving the case mandates that Randall Ford revise its ADA policy to provide a clear avenue for employees to request a reasonable accommodation. Additionally, Randall Ford will distribute its revised policy to all employees, post notice of this resolution, and provide disability training to all of its employees.

"The EEOC is committed to enforcing the laws against disability discrimination on the job," said Faye A. Williams, regional attorney of the EEOC's Memphis District Office, which has jurisdiction over Arkansas, Tennessee, and portions of
Mississippi. "Ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to succeed in the workplace is central to the ADA and is a priority for the EEOC."