

## **Four Housing Complexes in Spokane Will Be Made Accessible**

On May 20, 2009, the developer, architects, and engineers of four multi-family housing complexes in the Spokane, Washington, area entered into a consent decree with the Department resolving a lawsuit alleging that the complexes were designed and constructed in violation of the Fair Housing Act. The complexes are the Rock Creek Apartments, the Prairie Hills Apartments, the Granite Court Apartments, and the Hilby Station Apartments.

Under the settlement, which was approved by the federal court in Spokane on May 26, the defendants will make the apartment complexes accessible to people with disabilities. The retrofitting includes reconfiguring bathrooms and kitchens, widening inaccessible doorways, replacing inaccessible door hardware, modifying walkways to eliminate excess slopes and level changes, providing accessible curb ramps and parking, and providing accessible walks to site amenities such as the clubhouses, pools, mailboxes, and trash facilities.

The defendants will also undergo training on the requirements of the Fair Housing Act and pay \$120,000 to compensate individual victims of discrimination. In addition, the developer will pay a \$10,000 civil penalty to vindicate the public interest. People who believe they may have been harmed by the lack of accessible housing at one of the apartment complexes involved in this lawsuit should contact the Justice Department at 1-800-896-7743.

“This settlement agreement makes clear that the federal government takes seriously accessibility requirements for multifamily housing,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Loretta King.

“Accessible multifamily housing substantially improves the quality of life for many persons with disabilities in the Spokane area,” said James McDevitt, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington. “This settlement assures that these multifamily housing complexes will be modified to comply with the Fair Housing Act.”

*excerpted from Disability Rights online news, issue 31*