



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

CRT
(202) 514-2008
TDD (202) 514-1888

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES \$800,000 SETTLEMENT WITH NORTH CAROLINA DEVELOPER FOR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Justice Department today announced that William E. Dansey, Jr. and Quality Built Inc., the developers of the Breezewood Condominiums and Hyde Park Apartments in Greenville, North Carolina, have agreed to pay \$800,000 to settle a federal lawsuit alleging that they discriminated against persons with disabilities.

"Cutting corners in the construction of new housing does not pay," said R. Alexander Acosta, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "This settlement agreement will remind housing developers of their legal obligation to make multifamily housing complexes accessible to persons with disabilities."

The agreement, which still must be approved by Chief District Judge Terrence William Boyle, requires the defendants to pay \$700,000 to retrofit the Hyde Park and Breezewood complexes; pay \$70,000 to six families who were harmed by the lack of accessible features; and pay a \$30,000 civil penalty. The defendants must also comply with the Fair Housing Act, which requires new apartment complexes and condominiums with four or more units to include accessible common and public use areas.

The agreement resolves a lawsuit first brought by the United States in 2001 against the developer defendants as well as the architectural firm that designed Hyde Park and Breezewood. The United States entered into a separate settlement with the architectural firm in 2003, under which the architect agreed to pay \$340,000 to resolve the United States' claims, making the combined settlement for the United States' lawsuit over \$1.1 million.

"Final resolution of this case is an important step in continuing efforts to assure that the Fair Housing laws are enforced in the Eastern District of North Carolina," said Frank D. Whitney, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina. "The public and building industry should be assured that these laws, providing for accessibility in housing, are a priority for this office. This settlement sends a signal that owners and developers are not exempt from the obligation to comply with those laws."

Through the President's New Freedom Initiative, the Civil Rights Division is committed to providing greater access for Americans with disabilities. Since January 20, 2001, the Division

(MORE)

has filed 147 lawsuits under the Fair Housing Act, including 30 based on the Act's design and construction provisions.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status (having children under 18). Persons who believe that they have been victims of unlawful housing discrimination should contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777 or the Justice Department at 1-800-896-7743 or 202-514-4713. Additional information is available at www.hud.gov and www.usdoj.gov/crt/crt-home.html.

###

05-052