



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United States Enters Agreement to Ensure Access for Persons with Disabilities at Bluebeard's Castle Restaurants

St. Thomas, USVI - United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe today announced an agreement with Great Vistas, LLC and the United States government that will ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the three restaurants at Bluebeard's Castle on St. Thomas.

The settlement was entered to resolve a complaint filed with the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) against Bluebeard's Castle resort on St. Thomas because it was not readily accessible and usable by persons with disabilities. Three restaurants are located at Bluebeard's Castle: Room with a View, Banana Tree Grille and The Cabana Bar. Great Vistas, which has owned and operated the common areas of Bluebeard's Castle since 2008, is the landlord for the resort's restaurants. Under the terms of the agreement, three lifts will be installed over a three-year period to make the restaurants accessible. Room with a View will be accessible by the end of 2012; The Cabana Bar by the end of 2013, and Banana Tree Grille by the end of 2014.

"We are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to dine in restaurants and participate in the same activities as all other persons, not just at Bluebeard's Castle, but throughout the territory," Sharpe said. "We commend Great Vistas for working cooperatively with the United States Attorney's Office on this settlement, and for welcoming persons with disabilities

and their families at Bluebeard's Castle.”

The ADA requires newly constructed and altered facilities to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Places of public accommodation, such as restaurants and other businesses that are open to the public, that are in existing facilities are required to remove architectural barriers to accessibility when such removal is readily achievable. The ADA also protects people with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in services, programs and activities provided by state and local government entities.

An investigation of Bluebeard's Castle conducted by the United States found numerous architectural barriers to access to the restaurants. The restaurants are on three different levels, and are currently connected to each other by stair access. The lobby and check-in area is on an upper level, higher than the three restaurants. The United States' investigation also found that since 2009, Bluebeard's Castle had planned to renovate the lobby and check-in area. The alterations included installing ADA-compliant restrooms and ensuring that the interior and exterior routes to the lobby are accessible.

Under the agreement, Great Vista will take several important steps to improve access for individuals with disabilities, including: (1) installing a wheelchair lift from the main building lobby to Room with a View courtyard, and accessible ramps with handrails from the courtyard to the restaurant; (2) installing a wheelchair lift from Room with a View level to the Cabana Bar level, (3) installing a wheelchair lift from the Cabana Bar level to the pool deck, and accessible ramps with handrails from the pool deck to the Banana Tree Grille; and (4) signage, accessible parking spaces and accessible restrooms.

The United States Attorney's Office also has initiated compliance reviews throughout the

territory of several government agencies and private businesses, including restaurants, banks and retail establishments, to improve access to all aspects of civic life for people with disabilities, including persons who are hearing and vision impaired.

Persons interested in finding out more about the ADA or in making complaints can call the U.S. Justice Department's toll free ADA Information Line at 800-5140301 or 800-5140383 (TTY), or access its ADA website at www.ada.gov. Complaints can also be made at the U.S. Attorney's Office at (340) 774-5757 on St. Thomas and (340) 773-3920 on St. Croix.