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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Montana Fair Housing is continuing to work to provide information about our services, current cases, and fair housing issues developing around the state. To that end, MFH is sending out its quarterly update again on a regular basis. If you are aware of anyone that would like to be added to this list, please send me her/his e-mail address.

MFH maintains and attempts to keep current a list of housing that should be accessible to persons with mobility limitations. This list includes units located in Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Livingston, Belgrade, Kalispell, Hamilton, East Helena, and Billings.

Please Note: We cannot guarantee that equal housing opportunities are available at all of the sites contained on the list as there may be actions that have been taken by local government agencies and/or private developers, builders, and architects that do not assure compliance with their accessible design and construction responsibilities under the law. In addition, these entities may have taken actions based on other protected class membership, including occupancy standards limiting or attempting to limit residence based on disability or age or marital status or other protected class, that may have discriminatory impacts.

MFH asks that you immediately report to our office any information you have or receive concerning possible housing discrimination. Please encourage your constituents or clients to contact MFH as we can provide victims of discrimination with counseling regarding equal housing opportunities available to them and options to address the discriminatory conduct.

If you would like a copy of our accessible housing list for the area you serve, please do not hesitate to contact me at pam@montanafairhousing.org or by phone at 406-782-2573 or 800-929-2611.

Current Accessibility Efforts: Montana Fair Housing recently received a cause finding against the City of Bozeman in regards to their ordinance defining "household" for purposes of its occupancy and zoning restrictions. MFH alleged that the ordinance discriminated against households based on disability, age, and marital status. The state of Montana determined that current zoning restrictions in R-S, R-1 and R-2 in Bozeman are impediments to equal housing opportunities for community residential homes, assisted living facilities, and elderly care facilities, and adversely impact households based on age. MFH intends to proceed with its claims of disability, age and marital status discrimination either in an administrative hearing or in an appropriate district court action. Until a final decision is reached, you may wish to check on any activities of your organization in Bozeman to see if they may be adversely affected or have been adversely affected by city policies, regulations or ordinances.

Again, MFH cannot assure persons seeking housing in those areas of Bozeman that housing opportunities are available on an equal opportunity basis. We are hoping to discuss remedial actions with the City of Bozeman in the next few weeks to address the discriminatory impacts

of their current zoning ordinances and enforcement activities, but until such time as an agreement is reached and zoning ordinances and activities are revised, housing opportunities may remain limited in those areas.

MFH also received a cause finding regarding properties on Long Bow in Bozeman that were certified for occupancy in 2008. The properties do not meet the design and construction requirements under fair housing laws. MFH is presently in negotiations with the owner and is requesting the complex be brought into compliance with the accessible and adaptable features required. If appropriate remedial actions are taken to correct the deficiencies, MFH will be able to add the subject properties to its accessible housing list and will advise you accordingly.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR INFORMATION on the above fair housing issues, please feel free to call MFH at 406-782-2573 or 800-929-2611.