



Nothing about us, without us.

Kevin W. Williams
Legal Program Director
kwilliams@ccdconline.org
720-336-3584

FEBRUARY 8, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CENTRAL CITY FREE RIDE SETTLES LAWSUIT, WILL PROVIDE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SERVICE AT ALL TIMES

Central City Free Ride is a shuttle bus service that stops at several casinos between the gaming towns of Central City and Blackhawk. Plaintiff Elaine Culpepper requires the use of a motorized scooter. In August of 2011 Ms. Culpepper went to Central City and was denied access to Central City's Free Ride service because the shuttle did not have a wheelchair lift. Ms. Culpepper had to ride down the street in between Central City and Blackhawk, an extremely dangerous trip. She was first told that the lift-equipped shuttle was in the shop for maintenance. Later, Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition Legal Program, the organization representing Ms. Culpepper in the lawsuit, discovered that Central City operated only one small shuttle equipped with a wheelchair lift, and one much larger shuttle that did not have a wheelchair lift.

On February 7, 2012, the City Council of Central City gave final approval to a settlement agreement resolving this case. The settlement agreement requires that all Free Ride shuttle buses will be accessible. It also requires payment of \$2,000.00 to Elaine Culpepper and a payment of attorneys' fees and costs to CCDC's legal program.

Of the settlement, Ms. Culpepper said "It was very scary to have to ride down the street between the two towns in my scooter. I'm really going to enjoy the Central City Free Ride when I go to Central City and Blackhawk in the future." Initially, Ms. Culpepper wrote to Central City describing her experience and filed a complaint of discrimination with the Department of Justice. The DOJ found Central City's Free Ride service to be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CCDC Legal Program director said "We are very pleased that Central City and its contractor, Colorado Coach Transportation, were willing to resolve this case quickly and provide equal service to all visitors to the towns."

The ADA requires that owners and operators of transportation services like Central City Free Ride ensure "that the vehicle is readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs." Having one accessible bus and not the other is simply not enough.

For more information on this and other lawsuits, please go to:
<http://www.ccdconline.org/program/legal/current>