



Bob Riley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Steve Shivers
COMMISSIONER

Tuesday, May 06, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kathleen McGehee
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

Birmingham hires disability act compliance officer

BIRMINGHAM – The Birmingham mayor’s office has a new staff member to ensure that all city-controlled properties comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Rudy Roussel, a recent graduate of University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), will ensure that the city streets and facilities comply with the guidelines in the ADA and are safe and accessible for people in wheelchairs.

“The city really needed this position,” Roussel said, who has quadriplegia after sustaining a spinal cord injury in a diving accident. “Having someone who uses a wheelchair helps with the suggestions that are being made to be ADA compliant.”

Roussel was hired for the job after meeting a member of the mayor’s staff, who suggested he apply. He is certainly well-qualified. He graduated with honors from UAB with a bachelor’s degree in psychology, English literature and pre-med. He also wrote a thesis about ADA compliance.

He gives credit to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for preparing him for his new job. Through the department’s Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) division, he received assistance with college tuition and books, classroom accommodations and plenty of guidance and counseling. The department’s State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) division has provided funding for personal care and has assisted with the purchase of a power wheelchair.

Now that Roussel is employed, VRS will work with the city to assure that he has the accommodations necessary to do his job.

“The Department of Rehab has been amazing,” Roussel said. “They were absolutely relentless in ensuring I got an education, and they would not stop until I found a job.”

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.