



THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

ADDRESSING CITIZENS' CONCERNS



Happy New Year



One Step At A Time

Almost four years ago, as many Alabamians went about their normal, daily routine, others awakened to the sounds of tornado sirens. Although sirens were nothing new, this time, they proved to be life-challenging for residents in the western section of Birmingham. The Pratt City area was hit hard. Houses were leveled. Trees, and lives as well, were uprooted. Those uprooted trees caused sidewalks to crack and become inaccessible to pedestrians. Through-

out all the devastation, residents in Pratt City remained determined to rebuild their community after the April 27, 2011 tornado. Birmingham was awarded \$10 million in federal grant money to rebuild storm-damaged roads in Pratt City through work on sidewalks, bike lanes and trail; and improve connections within the city as well as with regional neighbors. The city has taken steps to make the area accessible by adding new sidewalks in the Pratt City area and making cer-

tain newly build infrastructures are accessible for person with disabilities. In the downtown district, the city has installed new sidewalks, curbs and tactile paving to make access possible. Some say, "there is still lots to be done," but there are many visible signs that accessibility is moving and will continue to move forward in Birmingham.

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ADA BUSINESS BRIEF: SERVICE ANIMALS

Under the ADA, State and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go. Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Since March 15, 2011, only dogs are recognized as service animals under titles II and III of the ADA. Businesses that are classified as Title II and Title III entities must permit service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas where members of the public are allowed to go. The Service Animal must be restrained by harness, leash, or tethered, unless one of the devices mentioned interferes with the animal's work or the persons disability. If it is unclear what job the animal performs, only two questions can be asked: (1) is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? and (2) what work of task has the dog been trained to perform.



MOBILITY RIGHTS: SCOOTERS

We all have different abilities. For persons whose mobility is restricted, often motorized scooters have to be used in order to get from one place to another. Perhaps you have seen a person using one at the mall or grocery store or even in the workplace. One thing is certain: if you ever try to prevent entry to someone using one, it's against the law! According to Title II of the Americans with disabilities Act, state and local governments must allow persons with mobility disabilities to use power-driven mobility devices in their facilities, unless a particular device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements. This is also the law for businesses under Title III for places of public accommodations. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, prohibiting such use is considered discrimination. Public accommodations must comply with basic nondiscrimination requirements that prohibit exclusion, segregation, and unequal treatment. Log on to www.ada.gov to learn more.

ADAP: AN ADVOCATE FOR DISABLED CITIZENS

Here is a fact: People with disabilities should have the same chance as anybody else to participate in their communities. If accommodations are needed, they have the right to those accommodations. The good news is there's an agency whose mission is to make sure those opportunities are afforded. It's through the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program. You don't have to go all the way to Montgomery to get help. There's an office located nearby in Tuscaloosa. ADAP is part of a federally mandated protection and advocacy system that works nationwide for one mission- to provide legally-based advocacy services to people in Alabama with disabilities. It's daily mission is to protect, promote and expand the rights of disabled citizens. ADAP also serves as a referral service, provides information on public education programs and can answer questions about disability rights. For more information call 205-358-4928 or log on to <http://adap.net>.

DIFFERENT ABILITIES

In the summer of 2014 we introduced you to a new program launched by the Mayor's Office of ADA.



We celebrated the inaugural unveiling of the “Teen Interns Developing Employable Skills” or “T.I.D.E.S” internship program. Nine Birmingham City School Students and one Jefferson County school student had the opportunity to receive soft skills and travel training before reporting to their designated work sites. They were placed at Birmingham’s Parks and Recreation locations. Although it was a first job for some, site directors are already asking if the students can return. The T.I.D.E.S. Program worked to foster a sense of independence, build confidence, help set goals and increase students’ professional development. One of our students, Robert Wilson, has taken his opportunity to a whole new level. A senior at Woodlawn High School, Robert recently was selected to perform at the All-City Concert for Birmingham City Schools. This dedicated musician plays the trombone, and is getting ready to fulfill a lifelong dream. Robert traveled to Huntsville to audition for the amazing Maroon & White Marching Band at Alabama A & M University. He received a scholarship on site and upon graduating from Woodlawn will head to “The Hill” to pursue his college degree and his love for music. When asked

how this accomplishment feels, Robert said, “I am still amazed. God did this. This is like a dream come true.” We will continue to follow his success and we wish him well.

WHAT DOES THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY (ADA) DO?

The Americans with Disabilities Act, also known as Public Law 101-336, is a civil rights law. It makes it illegal to discriminate based on disability in several different areas of life. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in: employment, services rendered by state and local governments, places of public accommodation, transportation, and telecommunications services. People with epilepsy, spinal cord injuries, schizophrenia, AIDS, deafness, blindness, mental retardation, and major learning disabilities would be examples of individuals who are "covered" by the ADA. That means these persons are entitled to some legal protection using the provisions of the ADA. On the other hand, individuals with minor conditions which only last a short time -- such as sprained ankles, broken limbs, or the flu-generally would not be covered.

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10:00 AM 2nd Floor, City Hall



Working to Open Doors to
Accessible City Services

A Time To Remember

This year we will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Throughout the year in cities across the United States, the ADA National Network will celebrate this landmark event. The purpose of the celebration is remind us of the strides that have been made. It is also important that we continue to remember the valuable work that has been done to promote equality for people with disabilities. Birmingham, along with other community partners, will host several events. Be sure to watch for announcements across the city. We invite you to join us as we celebrate the many changes that have been made possible thanks to ADA. In communities, schools and workplaces, progress continues to be made. That is something for which we are grateful. Much work has been done; however, we must not rest on our laurels. The fight continues daily to bring more awareness to the needs of persons with disabilities. We must forge the way so that reasonable accommodations are part of the planning process - not just an after-thought for some. We look forward to the day when we celebrate the inclusion. Let our focus be not on one's disability but on giving dignity and showing due respect to those who have different abilities.

ADA Advisory Committee

Chair – John Duplessis— SSTE Employment Program

Xaveria Anderson - Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2007

Wendy Hicks— VA Medical Center

Lorine Kelly—MAX Transit (VIP Para transit)

Dan Kessler, Director- Disability Rights and Resources

Graham Sisson— Governor's Office on Disabilities (GOOD)

Yolanda Spencer- Alabama Department of Rehab Services

Myra Shamburger- Alabama Department of Rehab Services

Maria Lyas-Young - Birmingham City Schools

Greg Silas, Emergency 911

Kathy Lovell- ADA Disability Manager, Regions Bank

Michelle Belcher – Manager Liz Low Vision Center

