



**THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

**ADDRESSING CITIZENS' CONCERNS**

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**The Accessibility of Railroad Park**

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The long awaited opening of Railroad Park took place on September 18, 2010 and marked a new chapter in furthering the beauty of Birmingham in addition to becoming an example of accessibility for other cities. The entire four block area has been transformed from an empty weed filled lot into one of the most stunning, and more importantly, accessible parks that Birmingham has produced.

It's no secret that amenities such as restrooms, parking, etc., have to comply with ADA specifications. However, compliance becomes more of a difficulty when taking into account the hilly terrain and old authentic railroad material that covered the whole landscape. Despite these issues, planners were able to make the entire area accessible by making sure to incorporate soft pored surfaces and ADA compliant equipment at all playground areas and providing the pavilion area with accessible amenities so everyone can use this area. In addition, the walking trails throughout the park all meet ADA regulations for accessibility while giving everyone the opportunity to travel along a truly beautiful water feature.

All in all, Railroad Park has become an amazing facility that shows the innovative spirit of Birmingham. More importantly, Railroad Park is an exceptional model of accessibility for future parks in any metropolitan area.

**Seasons Greetings to All**



## Addressing Citizens' Concerns

### Park & Recreation to Implement Accessible Programs



Because of a lack of accessible inclusive programs for the disabled population to participate, a meeting was called involving the Division of Youth Services, representatives from the Park and Recreation Department, the Mayor's Office on Americans with Disabilities, in partnership with the Lakeshore Foundation, in order to rectify to this issue. The solution was to identify a flagship program that we could implement and promote. The Lakeshore Foundation hosted an event that showcased accessible events and seated volleyball was one of the sports that was fun for everyone and could easily be incorporated into the recreation centers.



Recreation leaders from park centers came together on November 17, 2010, to learn how to facilitate a new inclusive sport called seated volleyball. This program is geared towards promoting accessible activities for persons with disabilities at city recreation centers.

As a result of this meeting, seated volleyball will be available starting the beginning of the year 2011 at selected recreation centers and will be the first of more accessible programs that will be offered in the future. For more information on assessable activities, please contact your local recreation center.

### 2010 Alabama Disability Conference

This year's Alabama Disability Conference, held October 18<sup>th</sup> in Orange Beach, AL, was chalked full of insightful programs and educated everyone in attendance on everything from transportation to SSI benefits for individual's with a disability. The information for the programs was provided by a number of well known individuals that are highly respected in their fields.

Among the number of great presentations, Birmingham's own Judy Roy, of Independent Living Resources of Greater Birmingham, gave a very educational presentation, "Taking Political Action," to remind the disabled population they do have a voice and how it can be used to impact decisions made in Montgomery and Washington that can positively affect everyone. Sharon Ward, from the Governor's Office on ADA, spoke as well on the topic of "Understanding the ADA and ADA Amendments Act." This presentation was geared towards teaching individuals how to utilize knowledge of the ADA and how to recognize situations that require advocacy for persons with disabilities.

In addition to the presentations mentioned above, there was also a demonstration, "Emergency/Disaster Preparedness for Persons with Special/Functional Needs," given by Mr. Stephen Mambazo. This energetic workshop gave in-depth training on identifying three reasons why persons with special/functional needs and disabilities are at a greater risk for negative outcomes during an emergency, emergency planning, and three sheltering options in the state of Alabama.

The Emergency Preparedness presentation by Graham Sisson, of the Governor's Office on ADA, sparked ideas for future Emergency Preparedness program. Attending staff from the City's Americans with Disabilities Office back with many ideas that will be explored in the future to benefit the City of Birmingham to further accessible accommodation.

**The C.A.T.S. System is Up and Running!**

**This is the Home Page of the C.A.T.S. System**

The Mayor's Office on Americans with Disabilities is proud to announce the development of the Compliance and Accessibility Tracking System (C.A.T.S.). The purpose of this system is to track all ADA related construction, renovations and updates. The largest source of the information in this system is from citizen reported concerns. To the greatest extent possible, all citizen concerns should be routed through the 311 system. This will assist the ADA Director and staff in providing total transparency and accountability in the management of City of Birmingham. The goal of this process is to:

1. Provide the citizens of Birmingham quality service.
2. Deliver results as efficiently and economically as possible.
3. Streamline reporting on ADA related projects.
4. Establish measurable goals and quantitative analysis regarding ADA accessibility in the City of Birmingham.

Centralization of citizen contact will allow for the assignment of tracking numbers and enable the administration to easily follow the status of a project to completion. Complete visibility into the work volume and process flow will uncover inefficiencies and will allow organizational decisions to be made based on quantifiable data. The immediate benefit to ADA would be providing a better

**We are on the web!**

**Office On American with  
Disabilities**

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**The ADA Committee meets every  
Second Friday, 10:00 AM 2nd  
Floor City Hall Rm. 215**



The Candlelight Tour and Reception on December 3, during Christmas at Arlington. The historic antebellum home will be decorated to mimic an actual wedding that took place during the Christmas of 1933. Along with the 1933 wedding, will be a book-signing for the book release, "Arlington, Birmingham's Historic House," published by the Arlington Historical Association. The books will be on sale at Arlington and Samford University Bookstore.

The City of Birmingham has made accessible accommodations at Arlington and this year's open house, which is open to the public, will be from 10a.m. to 4p.m. on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 1p.m to 4p.m. on December 5<sup>th</sup>. However, the fully accessible museum will be decorated and open to visitors throughout the month of December.

## **ADA Advisory Committee**

Chair – John Duplessis—Easter Seals, Navigator Program

Vice Chair - Lorne Kelly—MAX Transit (VIP Para transit)

### **Committee Members**

Xaveria Anderson—Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2007

Trisston Burrows—Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005

Twanna Carter—VA Medical Center

Walter Daniels—Retired Educator

LaWanda East – Pastor, King of Faith Outreach Ministry

Shirley Hollis—Manager, Birmingham Parks & Recreation Centers

Dan Kessler—Director, Independent Living Resources, Birmingham

Mike Norris—Independent Living Resources/Greater Birmingham

Charles Priest—Director, Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Graham Sisson—ADA State Coordinator, Alabama Rehabilitation

Ron Talley—ASSISTECH Group

## **Christmas at Arlington**

