



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

**ADDRESSING CITIZENS' CONCERNS**

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 4 DECEMBER 2012


**East Pinson Valley Recreation Center Gets A Facelift**



After 10 years in the making, the long awaited and highly anticipated, East Pinson Valley Recreation Center welcomed the public as the doors were opened for their November 3, 2012 ribbon cutting ceremony. The new facility will be the new home of a number of new activities with the help of accessible rooms that will have the space for after school classes to neighborhood meetings.

Another feature that is noticed at the new facility is the weight room. It has been equipped with new equipment as well as the space needed to utilize everything. There is also new equipment that will allow individuals with mobility impairments to position their wheelchairs into a space that will allow them to work out alongside an able body friend. The space in the new work out area insures the necessary space to make it easily accessible for anyone hoping to enjoy a good work out.

Along with the new gymnasium, equipped with a full size basketball court, one of the biggest changes is the facility came with an indoor swimming pool with an accessible ramp and lift. This much anticipated swimming facility is fully accessible and has the ability to house a number of water sports and swimming lessons as well as therapeutic classes like water aerobics. With these accessible features, such as a chair lift and entrance ramp, the swimming pool can be accessed by anyone who wants to join in. Because of their attention to what is truly needed for the entire population to use, the new Pinson Valley Recreation Center is sure to be an example of what the City of Birmingham is doing to make all facilities accessible. For a list of activities and the times they are offered, please contact the East Pinson Valley Recreation Center at (205) 297-8013.

<b>Inside This Issue:</b>	
<b>18 Holes Accessible to All</b>	2
<b>New Pratt City Homes Built with Vistability in Mind</b>	2
<b>Assistive Technology in the Birmingham Public Libraries</b>	3
<b>Speeding Towards Your Dreams</b>	4
<b>Have A Safe and Happy New Year</b>	
	

## Addressing Citizens' Concerns

### 18 Holes Accessible to All



Whether it be from health issues to newly injured service men and women, we are seeing a growth among the number of individuals with a disability. Whatever the reason may be, it doesn't seem to deter individuals from participating in activities they've always enjoyed. One of these activities is the sport of Golf. To insure accessibility for anyone wanting to participate in this activity, **Roebuck Golf Course has recently acquired an accessible golf cart** for individuals with mobility impairments.

The new golf cart is equipped with a few useful assistive features that are designed to assist golfers with mobility impairments. One of the features will allow the golfer to rotate the seat to a comfortable position. Once in place, the seat will tilt into a position that allows the golfer to stand in a stable location while striking the ball. Once the desired shot is taken, the user can lean back, swivel the seat into its original location, and the golfer is then onto their next hole.

The seat also has the capacity to automatically slide out to one side of the cart. This gives the user the option to strike the ball from either a seated or standing position. In addition to the adjustable seat locations, the cart is also fully operated by the use of hand controls instead of traditional foot pedals. This allows individuals with a number of mobility impairments the ability to drive to whichever hole they'd like.

Roebuck Golf Course is a pretty challenging Course as well as one of Birmingham's most scenic. Because of all the great features offered, this course has become accessible to just about anyone who would like to tee off.

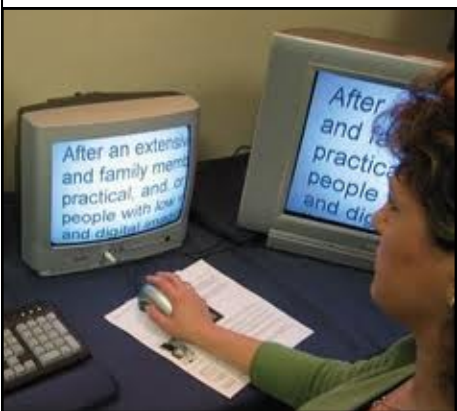
### New Pratt City Homes Built with Visability in Mind

Anyone who owns a house knows just how hard the search can be to find the perfect place they can call home. For individuals with a disability, however, this search can be a lot tougher. Not only are they looking for a perfect home, but a home that is also accessible. As we all know, tornados ripped through the Pratt City area of Birmingham destroying a number of houses to the point of disrepair. Due to the dedication of the residents, the administration, city planners, and a number of other organizations, Pratt City has begun rebuilding their community. However, this time the idea visitability and accessible design are at the forefront of everything being built. This includes all new homes. Along with the JCCEO, the City of Birmingham's Department of Planning, Engineering, and Permits are already underway with rebuilding Pratt City by completing of new homes with visitability in mind. This can be seen by the accessible features that started at the planning stage of the houses. Most homes are built with a small three to four inch lip that can be found at the entrance which makes it difficult for mobility impaired individuals to access. The planners did a great job of realizing this and have designed these houses on a flat surface or with at least one accessible entrance. The homes are also built with space throughout the home making it barrier free and easily maneuverable for anyone who may want to buy or visit. Another great feature these homes all have thick reinforced walls. This is important for anyone with a mobility issue that may want to have grab bars installed in the restrooms. Even though grab bars aren't standard, the design has made it easy for this accessible feature to be added.

Tornados may have destroyed a piece of Birmingham that forced people away from what they once called home. However, Birmingham has made a commitment to its residents by rebuilding this area. By building new homes with access and visitaility in the plans, this time it is being done with truly all residents in mind.

**Assistive Technology in the Birmingham Public Libraries**

Throughout all of the city's many buildings and facilities, the Birmingham Library System stands out because of their commitment to accessibility. There are a number of libraries in the city, and each one is unique to their own location while maintaining a standard of accessibility. The accessible features can be seen in areas such as the South Side Library where there is extra accessible parking with striped van isles that are located right in front of the electronically opened entrance as well as the Downtown Library where the gentle slope of the covered crosswalk allows individuals to easily maneuver between buildings without any barriers. In addition to the library's easy access, they also offer assistive devices that allow the hearing and visually impaired the opportunity to fully enjoy all that the libraries have to offer.



Individuals with visual impairments have the opportunity to use a device known as a Mono Mouse. Once plugged into a TV jack, the user places the Mono Mouse, a device that resembles computer mouse, onto any desired text. The text will be enlarged and projected onto the TV screen for projected reading. In addition to this device being available inside the library, it is also available for library check out so that it can be used at home.

For visually impaired individuals that would rather stay at the library and utilize one of their reading rooms instead, they will be able to do their reading with the use the Softpedia Text Reader. All one has to do is simply pass the device over written text and the information is automatically scanned. Once the desired text is uploaded, the read button is pushed and handheld speaks whatever it has scanned. This piece of equipment is not available for individuals to check out but it can be obtainable for use inside the library.



The libraries also offer assistive equipment for the hearing impaired. The hearing amplifier is worn just like a pair ear buds for an iPod. However, instead of playing music, it amplifies the sound around the device. Once the headphones are inserted and plugged into the unit, the hearing amplifier can be adjusted to fit the individual's own hearing needs. Seeing as the libraries offer videos, seminars, classes, book readings, etc., individuals with mid to low hearing loss can benefit from this device because it allows a person to take part in whatever is taking place without having to read lips or rely on an interpreter. The hearing amplifier is another piece of equipment that is unavailable for check out but is available for use inside the library. Because there are a number of libraries throughout the city of Birmingham,

it is understandable that each library has their own equipment. However, the previously mentioned equipment along with a list of additional assistive aids can be made sent to any branch location with a 48-hour notice. Because of reasonable accommodations such as those mentioned, the Birmingham Library System has become a leading example for any facilities that are looking to become ADA compliant. For more information, please contact the Birmingham Public Library at: (205) 226-3600.

**We are on the web!**

**Mayor's Office On  
American with Disabilities**

**How to contact us:**

Linda Coleman, ADA Director

E-mail: [linda.coleman@birminghamal.gov](mailto:linda.coleman@birminghamal.gov)

Phone: 205-254-2079

Rudy Roussel, Jr., ADA Project Coordinator

E-mail: [rudy.roussel@birminghamal.gov](mailto:rudy.roussel@birminghamal.gov)

Phone: 205- 297-8013

LaQuita Cade Administrative Assistant

E-mail: [laquita.cade@birminghamal.gov](mailto:laquita.cade@birminghamal.gov)

Phone: 205-714-8683

Fax: 205-254-2926

[www.birminghamal.gov](http://www.birminghamal.gov)

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



## **ADA Advisory Committee**

Chair – John Duplessis—SSTE Employment Program

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

Secretary– Vacant

### **Committee Members**

Xaveria Anderson - Ms. Wheelchair Alabama 2007

Trisston Burrows - Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005

Twanna Carter -VA Medical Center

Dan Kessler, Director- Disability Rights and Resources

Charles Priest - Director, Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Alice Sanders -United Cerebral Palsy

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

Peggy Turner – The Lakeshore Foundation

## **Speeding Towards Your Dreams**

For a great deal of us, just going out to run errands can be a hassle due to the frustration of daily traffic. This frustration can be even more exhausting for individuals with mobility impairments. However, for Birmingham native Ray Paprota, getting from point A to point B at speeds around 200 miles per hour is a way of life. What sets Ray apart from your every day driver is that he is the first and only paraplegic driver that is qualified to compete in the NASCAR Circuit.

At age 21, Paprota suffered a spinal cord injury in a motor vehicle accident. The accident left Ray a paraplegic that claimed the use of his legs. Undeterred by his paralysis, Ray had a race car specially designed with state of the art hand controls that enable him to operate the throttle, brakes, and clutch with both hands on the steering wheel. Once he got familiar with the hand controls, Ray began moving up to Birmingham's larger, faster, and more competitive International Sport Compact Auto Racing Series, or "ISCARS." He credits NASCAR and ISCARS (formerly known as the NASCAR Goody's Dash Series) with providing an opportunity to demonstrate his abilities in a race car rather than focusing on his limitations in a wheelchair.

Paprona was recently nominated for a coveted spot in the NASCAR Hall of Fame. If elected, he will be the only paraplegic driver to ever be inducted. From a young driver on local Birmingham tracks to the asphalt of Daytona, Ray Paprona has never let anything deter him from his dreams of becoming a professional race car driver. Despite losing the use of his legs, he has found a way to overcome all obstacles and achieve what others would consider impossible. Paprona has become, not only a testament to sheer determination, but a true inspiration for anyone that strives to reach their goals.