

2007 Disability Perspectives

[Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities and Local Committees](#)

[National and Texas Media Coverage](#)

[Texas](#)

[National](#)

[International](#)

Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities and Local Committees

The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) posts its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for the 2008-2009 biennium, covering areas such as access, communications, education, emergency management, health, housing, recreation, transportation and workforce.

Corpus Christi Committee for Persons with Disabilities hosts the Barbara Jordan Awards; secures KIII-TV as a sponsor. The station produces and airs a promotional PSA. Media professionals in seven categories receive awards.

In El Paso, GCPD presents Employment Awards to two individuals, four employers and one committee for excellence in employing and empowering people with disabilities. Governor Perry provides video remarks.

GCPD's 2007 Disability Employment Awareness Month poster features Cassandra Langdon's story and artwork "First Day of Spring". Bell County and El Paso committees host poster-signing events. GCPD distributes over 2,000 posters statewide.

GCPD releases results of accessibility surveys of campgrounds, visitor's/information centers, and tourist attractions.

GCPD member presents at Sunbelt Builder's Show regarding universal design of homes.

Staff and members comment on and assist with training regarding rules to make state information resources accessible.

Staff coordinates panels on emergency preparedness and people with disabilities and chairs committee of National Council on Disability (NCD) on this subject.

Staff chairs panel on release of an NCD report on livable communities held at the American Association for Retired Persons and carried on C-SPAN.

Staff revises website on Key Texas laws to reflect new legislation and resources.

Staff and members work with new disability navigators from workforce boards resulting in new local committees and coordination of many events using GCPD materials.

Staff and members assist the Texas Ramp Project to expand statewide; approximately 400 ramps are built for people with disabilities.

Members and staff participate in the Southern Methodist University mechanical engineering department's program for developing devices for people with disabilities.

Staff provides training for Austin taxi drivers about serving riders with service dogs.

GCPD interacts with Texas Rehab Action Network and presents the “Scoop on Reporting about People with Disabilities” resulting in increased interest.

Staff meets with Representatives from Uzbekistan to share insights about disability services and planning.

Staff and members tour Fort Hood, arranged by the Bell County Judge and Commissioners’ Committee on People with Disabilities.

The Dallas Mayor’s Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities presents an employer breakfast about changing the culture of business - enveloping persons with disabilities.

The Houston Mayor’s Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities hosts an employment seminar and informational breakfast for businesses in the Houston area.

The Houston Mayor’s Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities awards \$9,000 to 10 local scholarship winners. The Committee updates and distributes the “College Resource Directory for Students with Disabilities” to area schools.

[\(Back to the Top\)](#)

National and Texas Media Coverage

Bob Woodruff, an ABC News Anchor, presents an up-close look at brain injuries and Veteran care. Mr. Woodruff also discusses his brain injury from a roadside bomb in Iraq.

Santa signs via videophone at SigningSanta.tv, or on the internet at SigningSanta.com.

“Through Deaf Eyes”, a documentary exploring 200 years of life in America airs on PBS.

Austin Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities sponsors screening of “The Right to Risk”, a documentary about individuals with disabilities on a whitewater rafting trip through the Grand Canyon.

PressZoom, an online global news service and press release distribution system, includes the Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities’ web site.

FEMA press release describes the need for elderly and persons with disabilities to prepare for hurricanes.

WGBH Boston receives the rights to stream the audio for the Masterpiece Theatre production, “Wind in the Willows” on the PBS web site.

WGBH receives a grant from the Department of Education to make content on handheld media devices more accessible.

The Austin Film Festival shows “Team Everest 03”, a documentary of people with disabilities’ journey to the top of Mount Everest. This is a project of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

Shea Megale, age 12, writes the Marvelous Mercer books about her service dog. Shea has spinal muscular atrophy type 2. Proceeds from book sales will go to SMA research and Canine Companions for Independence.

Austin native and Pflugerville resident Clarence Swenson gets a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Mr. Swenson was a munchkin in the "Wizard of Oz."

"The Child King" a holiday movie featuring a lead actor with Down Syndrome is released on DVD.

"Music Within" airs in a limited number of theaters telling the story of Richard Pimentel who lost hearing while in Viet Nam and subsequently became a national trainer regarding rights of persons with disabilities.

"The Lookout" airs featuring a young bank janitor with a head injury who robbers attempt to use in a heist. The janitor uses a memory book; his roommate, who cooks and provides some assistance, is blind.

[\(Back to the Top\)](#)

Texas

Governor Perry announces numerous Emerging Technology grants in the fields of drug research, robotics, nanotechnology, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and medical testing.

Governor Perry announces substantial Texas Enterprise Fund grant to Scott and White for expansion of cancer research.

Governor Perry makes 32 appointments to Committees and Councils involved with disability issues.

Governor Perry hosts UT Arlington's Movin' Mavs wheelchair basketball team at the capitol, recognizing the players for the 2006 championship.

Texas Legislature passes new laws regarding property tax exemptions, graduation of special education students, transition planning, accessible electronic college materials, evacuation of people using service animals, prescription medication during disasters, education and prevention of diabetes, cancer research, alerts for missing seniors, laser sighting for hunters who are legally blind, insurance coverage, and accessible parking for veterans.

Texas Department of State Health Services creates a new web site for people to register as an organ, tissue or eye donor.

Texas Health and Human Services adopts policy on accessible information products and services.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hosts the GCPD's DVD, "Scoop on Reporting on People with Disabilities" online.

Texas Bar Foundation announces the "Sign Up Fund" to help Texas lawyers pay for sign language interpreters.

Judge Marion T. Carson is the only totally deaf judge presiding in Texas - serving the Cibolo Municipal Court. (Cibolo is east of San Antonio.)

A Houston limo driver receives probation and posts two \$400 bonds for his refusal to take passengers with guide dogs to the airport.

Texas Children's Hospital receives a donation to help build the world's first Pediatric Neurological Research Institute.

A high-tech Army rehabilitation center for service members with amputations or burns opens in San Antonio.

New Fort Bliss Restoration & Resilience Center restores battle-readiness to post-deployment soldiers and their families using integrated state-of-the-art treatment.

Abilities Expo/Texas in San Antonio educates people with disabilities, senior citizens, as well as family members and caregivers about disability products and services.

Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center in Houston uses Language Access Network, Inc, a live video interpretation service available in over 150 languages, including American Sign Language.

Matt Philips, a fifth grader from Abilene, Texas who has osteogenesis imperfecta, qualifies to compete in a National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association inducts Texas Coach Beverly Kearney into the Hall of Fame. Ms. Kearney sustained disabilities in an automobile accident.

Bass Concert Hall in Austin offers Disney's "The Lion King" in American Sign Language and with audio description.

4-H in partnership with Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired receives a grant to promote environmental awareness.

Ronan Tynan M.D., an amputee and champion athlete, physician, and renowned tenor speaks and performs at Baylor University.

U.T. graduate student Meredith Yarbrough starts a rowing club at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

[\(Back to the Top\)](#)

National

A Supreme Court ruling gives parents of children with disabilities the right to go to court without a lawyer to seek compliance with special education law.

Congressman Edward Markey receives the Susan G. Hadden Pioneer Award for support of accessible technology.

Department of Justice increases access in casinos, a mall, two colleges, several hotels, the city of Eastpoint, MI, and a national restaurant chain.

Department of Justice increases communication access in health, medical and learning centers, and an attorney's office.

Department of Justice awards a grant to SafePlace of Austin to expand its model of services for clients with disabilities who have been victims of abuse.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission presents best practices awards for access and inclusion to an international hospital center, a non-profit health care provider, a Federal agency bureau, a city government, and a disability advocacy organization.

U.S. Department of Transportation issues grants to eight U.S. cities to improve transit service for older Americans and people with disabilities.

IRS makes accessible "Speech Friendly" or "Talking Tax Forms", and downloadable Braille forms available online.

Boeing's new jet, the 787 Dreamliner, has bathrooms large enough to accommodate wheelchairs.

U.S. District court for the Northern District of Illinois mandates, when medically appropriate, Medicaid eligible nursing facility residents be provided a motorized wheelchair.

Under terms of a settlement, Washington D.C. Metro will now offer door-to-door service for Metro Access riders.

In a first agreement of this kind, San Francisco will install accessible pedestrian signals at 80 intersections.

Chicago agrees to a \$50 million settlement, the largest ever, to install ADA compliant curb ramps.

National Council on Disability issues research and speaks out on employment, reasonable accommodation, ADA, Homeland Security and victims of crime.

Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine announces a grant that will result in the employment of at least 20 individuals with disabilities by state government.

Thirty-one States receive Money Follows the Person grants, allowing approximately 9,800 people to transition back into the community.

The Federal Communications Commission requires VoIP service to comply with accessibility rules.

American Association of Retired Persons and the National Association of Home Builders announce the Livable Communities Annual Award for three areas: building, remodeling, and developing projects that incorporate universal design.

Amazon™ agrees to increase website accessibility.

National Federation of the Blind reaches an agreement with Cardtronics, Inc. to make all ATM's owned, sold or serviced by Cardtronics, Inc. accessible by July, 2010.

Schepens Eye Research Institute in Boston identifies the key to integrate transplanted nerve cells, which may make retina, spinal cord and other central nervous system transplants possible.

Touch Bionics' i-LIMB™ hand looks and acts like a human hand.

The Center for Disease Control posts disaster preparedness videos with American Sign Language and captioning.

A student at the University of Illinois invents a mind-controlled wheelchair that converts neurological signals into commands.

Vinton G. Cerf, who is hearing impaired, serves from 1999 to 2007 as chair of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

A free online video chat program called Camfrog® allows two-way communication by sign language in real-time over the internet.

The Kennedy Center Opera House includes audio description for “The Phantom of the Opera.”

Stephen Hawking, the noted theoretical physicist with a disability, experiences weightlessness aboard a flight with Zero Gravity.

Army Times selects Captain Scott M. Smiley, blinded in Iraq, as 2007 Soldier of the Year.

Jessica Long is the first Paralympic athlete to win the Sullivan Award given by the Amateur Athletic Union.

Lance Magin of Magin Motorsports collaborates with Cal-Diego Paralyzed Veterans Association establishing the first Pararally Racing Team in the U.S.

[\(Back to the Top\)](#)

International

At least 10 countries ratify the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

U.N. Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication promotes international technology accessibility.

First Daughter Jenna Bush writes *Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope*, about a woman in Latin America living with AIDS.

The National Assembly of Nigeria passes disability legislation covering employment, education, politics, and health services.

A “smart” house built by the University of Bath's Institute of Medical Engineering helps people with dementia gain greater independence.

Canada and India issue stamps celebrating Braille; Canada's stamp also recognizes guide dogs.

Texas Special Olympics athletes compete in the 2007 Summer World Games in China.

Dr. Ajith Perera, a former Sri Lanka cricket umpire who acquired paraplegia, campaigns for greater access at sporting venues, coinciding with Sri Lanka's “Year of Accessibility”.

Miles Hilton-Barber, a pilot who is blind, flies with co-pilots from London to Sydney to raise money for charity.

[\(Back to the Top\)](#)

Prepared by:
Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/>
512-463-5739; Dial 711 for Relay Services

S:shared/zephyr/History-Disability/2007 Disability Perspectives