

APR - 5 1995

April 4, 1995

MEMORANDUM TO CAROL H. RASCO

From: Elisabeth Cohen and Diana Fortuna

Subject: Project Action and the AgrAbility Project

As you know, we met with Randall Rutta and Chris Tiernan of the National Easter Seals Society on March 20, 1995 to discuss the Transportation Department's Project Action and the USDA's AgrAbility Project. Representatives from each department were present and the meeting provided a clear over-view of each program.

OMB has informed us that Project Action is included in the President's budget for FY '96 for \$2 million; the 1995 budget for this program was also \$2 million. However, you should be aware that the AgrAbility Project was not funded in the President's FY '96 budget. (Like Project Action, the AgrAbility Project has an annual budget of \$2 million.) Apparently, each year, this program is not included in the President's budget, but Congress includes it. In the new Congress, the protection of the AgrAbility Project is not as likely as in the past.

We could pursue with OMB the possibility of funding it in future years; on the other hand, it is a small categorical program in an era of block grants. Any reactions?

*I think we
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it alone...*

*Thanks for meeting w/ them
& keeping me up to
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Is there anything else that we can do to follow-up?

but

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We could pursue the possibility of linking it to future years; on the other hand, it is not a categorical program in an era of block grants. Any reaction?

Helping People with Disabilities Achieve Independence

National Easter Seal Society
Office of Public Affairs

1350 New York Avenue N.W., Suite 915
Washington, D.C. 20005
202 347.3066
202 347.7385 (TDD)
202 737 7914 (fax)



5 - Return this
to me
[Signature]

March 30, 1995

Ms. Diana Fortuna
Office of the Assistant
to the President
for Domestic Policy
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Fortuna:

Thank you very much for convening a meeting to discuss the status and future of the AgrAbility Project and Project ACTION. I enjoyed meeting you and Elizabeth. Your interest in these worthwhile programs is much appreciated.

The National Easter Seal Society is fully committed to the expansion of AgrAbility and Project ACTION activities. Both programs foster cost-effective public/private partnerships that enhance the independence and productivity of hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities who work in agriculture or who use accessible transportation. They promote self-help, volunteerism and community accessibility/ADA compliance through direct assistance to individuals, businesses, and local public service agencies. The Administration's active support for AgrAbility and Project ACTION in the Farm Bill and ISTEA (1996) reauthorizations, the setting of priorities at USDA and USDOT, and the FY 1996 appropriations process represents the optimal outcome of this meeting.

Chris Tiernan and I are meeting with Members of Congress and their staff to promote continuation of these programs. Easter Seal affiliates and an array of disability and industry groups are supporting this effort with calls, letters, and personal visits. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the next step in our collaboration to enhance the role of these projects in promoting transit accessibility and the safe accommodation of disability in agricultural production. Thanks, again, for your assistance.

Mike Deish
NRC
62801

Best regards,

Randy Rutta

Randall L. Rutta
Vice President, Government Relations

AGRABILITY PROJECT



Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

The National Grant Program of the AgrAbility Project is a joint effort of the USDA Extension Service, the National Easter Seal Society, and Purdue University's Breaking New Ground Resource Center. This material is based upon work supported by the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 91-EDFA-1-0001.

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AGRABILITY PROJECT

National Easter Seal Society

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March 1995

AGRABILITY PROJECT HELPS FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES SUCCEED IN AGRICULTURE

FACT SHEET



Agricultural production is one of the nation's most hazardous occupations. Each year, approximately 120,000 people working in agriculture experience injuries that limit their ability to perform essential farm tasks. Tens of thousands more become disabled as a result of non-farm injuries, illnesses, other health conditions, and the aging process. Nationwide, approximately 500,000 farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers have physical disabilities that interfere with their farm work.

For many of these individuals, the presence of a disability jeopardizes their rural and agricultural futures. Rural isolation, a tradition of self-reliance, and gaps in rural service delivery systems frequently prevent agricultural workers with disabilities from taking advantage of growing expertise in modifying farm operations, adapting equipment, promoting farmstead accessibility, and using assistive technologies to safely accommodate disability in agricultural and rural settings. Yet, with some assistance, the majority of disabled agricultural workers can continue to earn their livelihoods in agriculture and participate fully in rural community life.

The AgrAbility Project was created to assist people with disabilities employed in agriculture. It links cooperative extension services with nonprofit disability service organizations to provide practical education and assistance that promotes independence in agricultural production and rural living. In just three years, the AgrAbility Project has emerged as one of rural America's most valuable and cost-effective resources.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Extension Service launched the AgrAbility Project in 1991. First year funding for the program was \$1.0 million, which initiated eight projects serving twelve states. Congress has increased appropriations every year since then, annually expanding the number of AgrAbility projects and scope of AgrAbility activities. Congress allocated \$1.5, \$1.75, \$2.0, and \$2.0 million in FY 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995, respectively.

*The National
Grant Program
of the
AgrAbility Project
is a joint effort of*

The USDA
Extension Service

The National
Easter Seal Society

Purdue University's
Breaking New
Ground Resource
Center

At present, seventeen AgrAbility projects serve nineteen states: Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Each project involves a state Cooperative Extension Service, a disability service organization, and other rural interests in collaborative activities aimed at helping people with disabilities to continue in agriculture.

An AgrAbility National Grant Program, established in fiscal year 1991 and renewed each fiscal year since, provides nationally-coordinated training, technical assistance, and information exchange. The national program is carried out cooperatively by Purdue University's Breaking New Ground Resource Center and the National Easter Seal Society. Although the bulk of national program resources are devoted to supporting state AgrAbility projects, information on accommodating disability in agriculture is available to interested individuals and organizations by calling (800) 825-4264.

Congress authorized the AgrAbility Project in the 1990 Farm Bill. The AgrAbility provision promotes the combination of agricultural know-how with disability expertise to provide farmers with disabilities and others the specialized services they need to safely accommodate their disabilities in everyday farm operations.

As authorized, the program engages Extension agents, disability experts, rural professionals, and volunteers in offering an array of services, including: identification and referral of farmers with disabilities; provision of on-site technical assistance on adapting and using farm equipment and tools; modification of farm operations and buildings; provision of agriculture-based education to prevent further injury and disability; and training to help Extension Service agents and other rural professionals upgrade their skills in assisting farmers with disabilities. It also provides for nationally-coordinated training, technical assistance, and information dissemination to support diverse project activities.

In 1993, the AgrAbility Project, comprised of fourteen state/multi-state projects and the national support program, accomplished the following:

- assisted 895 farmers, ranchers, farm workers or their family members affected by disability;
- trained over 11,000 agricultural, rehabilitation, and health professionals on safely accommodating disability in agriculture;
- recruited and trained hundreds of volunteers to assist agricultural producers with disabilities and their families; and,
- reached 733,400 people through more than 1200 exhibits, displays, and demonstrations to increase awareness of the challenges affecting and resources available to people with disabilities working in agriculture.

Through state projects and the national grant program, the AgrAbility Project is helping hundreds of farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers with disabilities and their families to succeed in agricultural production and rural community life.

For information: Carol Maus, National Easter Seal Society, 202/347-3066.

1990 FARM BILL

The following provision was included in the 1990 Farm Bill to establish agricultural programs to assist farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities to continue in agriculture as a way of life. The Farm Bill authorizes federal agriculture and nutrition programs through fiscal year 1995. The Bill (H.R. 3950/S. 2839) was passed by the House of Representatives on October 23, 1990 and by the Senate on October 25, 1990. President Bush signed this legislation into law (P.L. 101-624) on Wednesday, November 28, 1990.

EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES

(a) Special Demonstration Grants.

(1) In general. The Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, shall make demonstration grants to support cooperative programs between State Extension Service agencies and private, nonprofit disability organizations to provide on-the-farm agricultural education and assistance directed at accommodating disability in farm operations for individuals with disabilities and their families, who are engaged in farming and farm-related occupations.

(2)(i) Eligible services. Grants awarded under paragraph (1) may be used to support programs serving individuals with disabilities, and their families, who are engaged in farming and farm-related occupations.

(2)(ii) Eligible programs. Grants awarded under paragraph (1) may be used to initiate, expand, or sustain programs that:

(A) provide direct education and assistance to accommodate disability in farming to individuals with disabilities who engage in farming and farm-related occupation;

(B) provide on-the-farm technical advice concerning the design, fabrication, and use of agricultural and related equipment, machinery, and tools, and assist in the modification of farm worksites, operations and living arrangements to accommodate individuals with disabilities who engage in farming, farm living, and farm-related tasks;

(C) involve community and health care professionals, including Extension Service agents and others, in the early identification of farm and rural families that are in need of service related to the disability of an individual;

(D) provide specialized education programs to enhance the professional competencies of rural agricultural professionals, rehabilitation and health care providers, vocational counselors, and other providers of service to individuals with disabilities, and their families, who engage in farming or farming-related occupations; and

(E) mobilize rural volunteer resources, including peer counseling among farmers with disabilities and rural ingenuity networks promoting cost-effective methods of accommodating disabilities in farming and farm-related activities.

(3) Extension Service Agencies. Grants shall be awarded under this subsection directly to State Extension Service agencies to enable them to enter into contracts, on a multi-year basis, with private, nonprofit, community-based direct service organizations to initiate, expand, or sustain cooperative programs described under paragraph (2).

(4) Minimum amount. No grant shall be awarded under this subsection in an amount that is less than \$150,000.

(5) Authorization of appropriations. There are authorized to be appropriated \$3,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1991 and 1992, and \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1993 through 1995 to carry out this subsection.

(b) National Grant for Technical Assistance, Training, and Dissemination.

(1) The Secretary of Agriculture shall award a competitive grant to a national, private, nonprofit disability organization to enable such organization to provide technical assistance, training, information dissemination, and other activities to support community-based, direct service programs of on-site rural rehabilitation and assistive technology for individuals with disabilities, and their families, who are engaged in farming or farm-related occupations.

(2) Authorization of appropriations. There are authorized to be appropriated \$1,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1991 through 1995 to carry out this subsection.

AGRABILITY PROJECT



National Easter Seal Society

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AGRABILITY PROJECT - PARTICIPANT CONTACT LIST

February 21, 1995

FEDERAL GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Brad Rein, USDA Extension Service (202) 401-4640

NATIONAL GRANT PROGRAM

Bill Field or Barry Delks, Breaking New Ground Resource Center (BNG),
Purdue University, Extension Service (800) 825-4264

Randall Rutta or Carol Maus, National Easter Seal Society (202) 347-3066

STATE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

COLORADO AGRABILITY PROJECT

Julia Beems, Colorado Easter Seal Society (303) 233-1666

Paul Ayers, Colorado State University, Extension Service (303) 491-6172

ILLINOIS AGRABILITY PROJECT

Robert A. Aherin, University of Illinois, Extension Service
(217) 333-9417

Duane Brusnighan, Illinois Easter Seal Society (217) 525-0398

INDIANA AGRABILITY PROJECT

Cindy Ade, BNG Resource Center, Purdue University (800) 825-4264

Adrienne Ploss, EmployAbilities (317) 447-0300

IOWA AGRABILITY PROJECT

Mary Yearns, Iowa State University, Extension Service (515) 294-6568

Chrystal Stanley, Iowa Easter Seal Society (515) 289-1933

KENTUCKY AGRABILITY PROJECT

John Hancock, University of Kentucky, Extension Service (606) 257-1845

Michelle Meserve, Cardinal Hill Rehab. Hospital (606) 254-5701 Ext. 534

LOUISIANA AGRABILITY PROJECT

Raye Neely, Louisiana State University, Extension Service (504) 388-6794

Clause Harper, Easter Seal Society of Louisiana (504) 455-5533

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of the
AgrAbility Project
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*The USDA
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*The National
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*Purdue University's
Breaking New
Ground Resource
Center*

MICHIGAN AGRABILITY PROJECT

Bill McLeod, Michigan State University, Extension Service (517) 353-3006
Karen Delbosque, Easter Seal Society of Michigan (517) 797-0880

MINNESOTA AGRABILITY PROJECT

John Shutske, University of Minnesota, Extension Service (612) 626-1250
Casey McGee, Easter Seal Society of Minnesota (612) 646-2591
Eleanor Depuydt, Rural Rehab Technology Program (507) 931-4043

MISSOURI AGRABILITY PROJECT

H. Willard Downs, University of Missouri, Extension Service (314) 882-2731
Brad Marsh, Services for Independent Living (314) 874-1646

MONTANA & IDAHO AGRABILITY PROJECT (regional project)

Nancy Procter, Montana State University, Extension Service (406) 994-1864
John Borgreen, Northern Rocky Mountain Easter Seal Society (406) 771-0026
Tom Karsky, University of Idaho, Extension Service, (208) 885-7627
Carolyn Burt-Patterson, Idaho Easter Seal Society (208) 384-1910

NEW YORK AGRABILITY PROJECT

Doreen Greenstein, Cornell University, Extension Service (607) 255-1143
Naomi S. Miner, FarmAbility, New York Easter Seal Society (607) 334-6933

NORTH CAROLINA AGRABILITY PROJECT

Nolo Martinez, North Carolina State University Extension Service (919) 515-2770
Debbie Moyer, Easter Seal Society of North Carolina (919) 783-8898
Daniel Lyons, North Carolina A & T State University (910) 344-7956

NORTH DAKOTA AGRABILITY PROJECT

George Maher, North Dakota State University, Extension Service (701) 231-8288
Jerry Phelan, Easter Seal Society of North Dakota (701) 234-9390

SOUTH CAROLINA AGRABILITY PROJECT

Ron Parker, South Carolina AgrAbility Project (803) 750-1992
Linda Redmann, Clemson University, Extension Service (c/o U of GA) (706) 542-4949

TENNESSEE AGRABILITY PROJECT

Timothy Prather, University of Tennessee Extension Service (615) 974-7237
Ronnie Tronnes, Easter Seal Society of Tennessee @ UT office (615) 974-7237
Ron Sanders, Easter Seal Society of Tennessee (615) 292-6640

VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE AGRABILITY PROJECT (regional project)

Daryl E. Lowry, Vermont Rural & Farm Family Vocational Rehabilitation Program,
University of Vermont (802) 656-3013
Sharon McLaughlin, Easter Seal Society of New Hampshire, Inc. (603) 889-0735

WISCONSIN AGRABILITY PROJECT

Ron Schuler, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Extension Service
(608) 262-0613
Paul Leverenz, The Easter Seal Society of Wisconsin, Inc. (414) 898-9224

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AGRABILITY PROJECT

AgrAbility Project: Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families



The Extension Service is an agency of the
United States Department of Agriculture and
the Federal Partner in the Cooperative Extension System.



Loretta and Carl Broecker farm 360 acres of corn, soybeans and wheat near Decker, Mich.

Disabilities don't have to keep farmers from farming

BY SHANNON LINDEROTH

Oct. 9, 1970 is a day Carl Broecker remembers well. "I had just turned 15 a few days before and was helping with fall grain harvest," he says. "Before I knew what was happening, I got caught in a power takeoff shaft and lost my left arm, had my right leg shortened by 1.75 inches and suffered hearing loss in my right ear."

Almost 24 years later, arthritis in his spine, right elbow, wrist and fingers is a nagging after-affect of the accident.

With a take-it-as-it-comes-and-shrug-off-the-rest attitude, Carl hasn't let his disability take over his life. He knew that he wanted to continue farming, and that's just what he's done.

Carl, wife Loretta and their three children farm his mother's 360 acres and raise a few replacement heifers near Decker, Mich. Loretta also works full-time as a herds person for a neighboring farm.

"I take care of the cows and Carl

handles the crops," Loretta says.

Since the accident, Carl adapted his farming to meet his abilities. Now on his fourth arm prosthesis—one with a special heavy-duty farmer's hook—Carl and his family have cooperated to get the work done. For instance, if he had to fix a piece of equipment, Loretta would hold the other wrench to keep the bolts from spinning.

But fixing equipment and working around the farm has gotten a little easier lately. Carl has been in contact with the Michigan AgrAbility Project (MAP), which helps provide farmers with disabilities the means to continue farming. (See adjacent story.) "It's (MAP) made a big difference," says Loretta.

Through interaction with MAP, and funding from the Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Carl has received several air-powered tools he now uses to work on equipment. An air-drill, air-chisel, air-saw, and an air-ratchet are light-weight alterna-

tives to conventional tools that were difficult for him to use alone. "Now Loretta doesn't have to be here to hold the other wrench," Carl says.

"I can help him around here without having to be right close by," Loretta says. "Even though I was helping him by holding the wrench or whatever, I didn't always feel like I was helping."

"And these tools are so light," exclaims Carl's mother, Rachel. "The other ones were so heavy."

An anti-vibration cushion for his tractor seat to make driving more comfortable has also been obtained through the project.

"We're looking into modifying equipment, too," says Carl. "Especially changing the steps on the combine and grain bins."

To help him with this, MAP also works with other agencies to offer services or financial assistance that it cannot. "We may refer the case to any number of other agencies who have the ability to pay for equip-

ment, modifications, therapy or whatever else has been recommended by our occupational therapist," explains MAP Director Karen Delbosque.

For Carl and Loretta, that meant they would be paired with an engineer to determine how equipment could be altered to further help Carl farm and keep him safe.

Rich Osentoski is a former farmer who returned to the classroom to become a mechanical engineer. He's working as a farm re-hab engineer for Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Easter Seals. He was contacted by Roy Schutzler of Michigan Rehabilitation Services Caro, Mich., office to work with the Broeckers.

"My job is to go over with farmers about how they presently do their tasks, discuss problem areas and develop a solution," Osentoski explains. "The idea is to increase levels of safety so they don't suffer other injuries or aggravate current injuries."

Osentoski and Carl discussed a

number of options that could be used on the farm. "We talked about automatic hitching and unhitching devices and telescoping tongues for wagons," notes Osentoski.

Their most extensive discussions, however, were about modifying Carl's combine and grain storage. "We're looking at completely different access to the cab of the combine," says Osentoski.

He's worked on redesigning the slope of the steps and extending the platform size, so Carl can get into the machine easily. "We're trying to make the slope of the steps equivalent to going up a stairway," Osentoski says.

As far as grain drying and storage is concerned, ways of changing access there were investigated, too. "I'm developing a system so Carl can perform both sampling and drying of the grain without climbing the grain bin so often," Osentoski notes.

However, until that can be accomplished, the engineer is again

searching for ways to decrease the slope of the ladder. The solution may include a circular ladder up the side of the grain bin and at the very least, a safety cage surrounding the existing ladder.

Also on the recommendation list is a convex mirror with wide angle capabilities so Carl can view tillage equipment from his tractor cab without having turn around.

Another equipment modification Osentoski and Carl discussed was to design two grain legs to fit Carl's custom-built grain cleaning mill. "One leg will allow him to pull up to the mill and unload right into the leg from a gravity box without having to haul around several augers," says Osentoski. The other leg will allow Carl to remove cleaned grain and load it into a truck or gravity box.

In the meantime, fields have to be planted and crops have to be harvested and stored. And it's getting done—with Carl at the helm, disability notwithstanding. □

What is the AgrAbility Project?

BY SHANNON LINDEROTH

If you or a family member is living with a disability, this project is designed for you. Its purpose is to provide education and assistance to farmers with disabilities and their families to keep them farming. It was established by a provision of the 1990 Farm Bill and funded through USDA. There are 14 projects country-wide serving 16 states, including Michigan.

The Michigan AgrAbility Project (MAP) is a partnership between the Cooperative Extension Service and the Easter Seal Society. The organization has also received financial support from Michigan Farm Bureau and other sources to make services available across the state.

Resources from Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Commission for the Blind, and commercial vendors from around the state are also tapped.

Assistance can range from outfitting farm machinery with adaptive equipment or providing other modifications around the home and worksite.

"Unfortunately, we can't help with bankruptcy, medical bills, past-due payments, medication,



Karen Delbosque, director of the Michigan AgrAbility Project, and Stephanie Wieck, a volunteer, (front) go over paperwork involved for individuals receiving assistance through the project.

attorney fees, etc.," says Karen Delbosque, MAP director. "We're strictly set up to work with modifications and farm-related adaptations."

MAP services are available at no cost to farmers and their immediate family involved in working on the farm. Also eligible are farm, ranch and logging employees, or employees from ag-related industries. These workers must receive at least some

portion of their income from these occupations.

Individuals with chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or multiple sclerosis also qualify for assistance.

Additional information about MAP is available through the Easter Seal Society at 1-800-292-2729 or the AgrAbility office in Saginaw, Mich., at (517) 797-0880. □

Back in the driver's seat

BY JOHN POCOCK

A family's resourcefulness helped paraplegic farmer David Roos regain his foothold on the home farm

Eight weeks after an overturned three-wheeler left him paralyzed from the mid-chest down, David Roos, Havana, Ill., was back in the driver's seat — on the family's combine, to be precise.

"I was thankful the cab was air-conditioned," says Roos, who was still in a half-body cast at the time. Since his accident in 1986, Roos hasn't slowed down. He's designed a new house, overseen its construction, sired a son and installed a multitude of gadgets to help him get around almost as conveniently as any farmer with two legs.

The keys to his successful comeback are a close-knit and committed family, dogged determination and resourcefulness.

"My wife, Sheryl, is my biggest support," Roos says. "It would have been difficult to keep going without her."

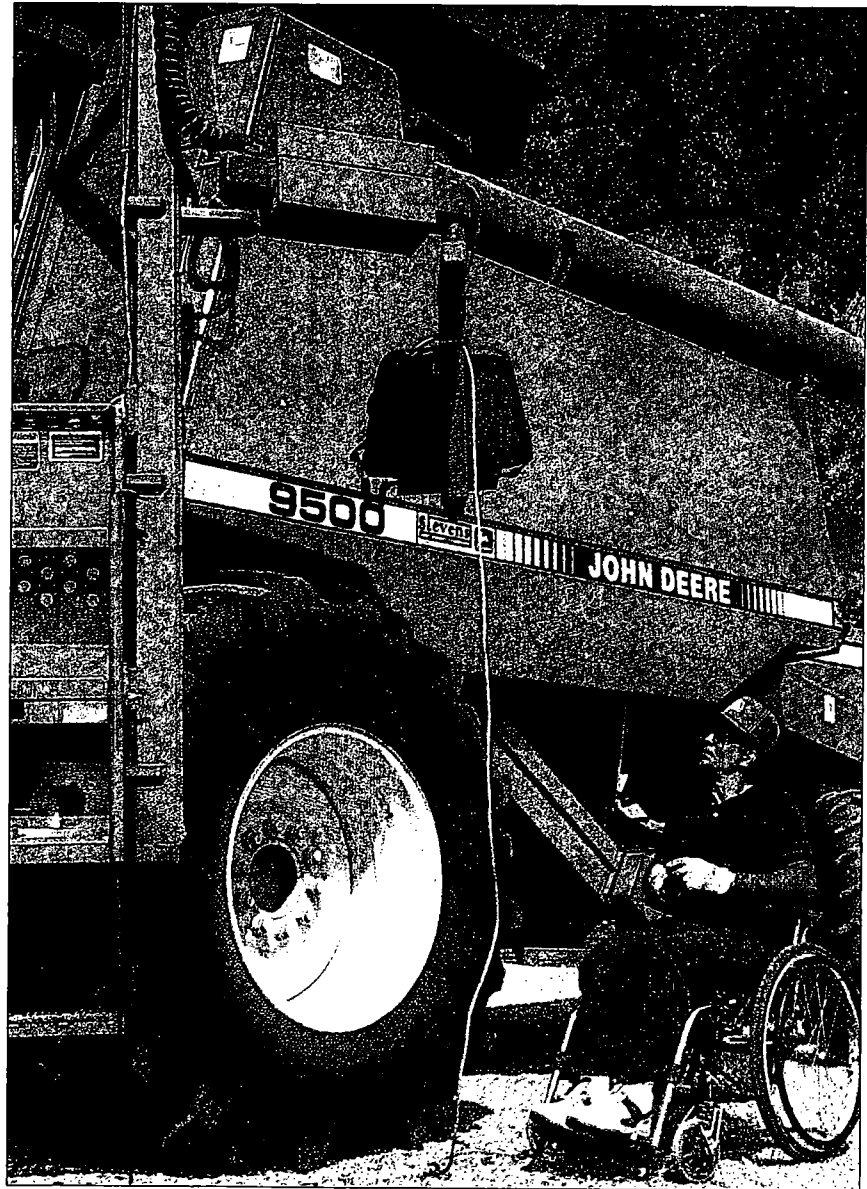
"But it also helped to get busy right away," he adds. "I never sat around at home wondering what I was going to do — I just got right back into harvest."

His father, Herbert, and brother, Steve, also helped motivate him to recover. "They had ramps ready for me at the house when I got out of the hospital. They hooked up a platform onto the front-end loader and literally rolled me into the combine."

As a result, Roos didn't miss any of harvest — thanks also in part to the combine's fingertip controls and hydrostatic drive.

Technology to the rescue. After that first harvest Roos decided he needed to become more independent. With financial assistance from the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation, he was able to purchase three mechanical lifts to help him into the driver's seat of various machines. Since then, he's purchased one other lift and modified the originals to fit other machinery. His local church has also contributed money for his special equipment through a fundraiser.

An old jeep and a heavy-duty, light-weight wheel chair now serve as his main sources of transportation around the farm. Roos installed



David Roos, Havana, Ill., uses hand controls to raise and lower the seat that lifts him into the combine for harvest. Roos was left a paraplegic after his three-wheeler overturned seven years ago.

hand controls on the jeep similar to those his medical insurance paid for on the family van, which also has a lift. But getting into the jeep is much more simple. He wheels himself over to the side and pulls himself into the driver's seat. Then he folds up the wheel chair and puts it into the open back compartment.

His spring-suspended wheel chair is called the "Iron Horse,"

made in Port Huron, Mich. "The spring action is better for going over rough, unlevel ground," Roos says, while demonstrating it on the uphill gravel drive near his house. "And that helps me because the ground is always rough and unlevel on a farm."

Grateful for help. While increasingly

(continued on page 46)

BINS A BOOMIN'

(continued from page 8)

of production on the farm as you can," he says. "In many cases, a few cents per bushel depends on whether a farm survives or not."

Drying on-farm is usually cheaper than the elevator if you have a dryer system, agrees Peterson. "The fuel cost will be about half the commercial charge," he

says. The average on-farm fuel cost runs about a penny a point per bushel, while the elevator cost is 2 to 2 and one-half cents per point of moisture removed.

But you need to consider several factors before you rule out elevator storage. On-farm storage doesn't pay as well as when the government paid for storage. "It's a matter of how much increase in price you expect to have with on-farm storage," says Peterson. "You also need to evaluate the risk of on-farm storage versus taking the corn

to the elevator and getting receipts.

"In a wet year like last year there was more risk," notes Peterson. "It could be similar this year, especially in northern and southern Illinois where we might see poor quality, immature corn harvested." Discounts for poor quality and spoilage can far outweigh any potential price gains during the storage period.

If you're considering a new bin, you should also think about how it will fit into future market opportunities for food-grade, high-quality and identity-preserved grains. "If you have the possibility of local markets for quality grain, look at systems that can be adapted. Combination drying or other methods that maintain quality will fit into this," says Peterson. □

BACK IN DRIVER'S SEAT

(continued from page 20)

self-sufficient, Roos admits he couldn't farm without his family. "In the winter, when my dad and brother are getting our machinery ready for spring, I keep busy keeping all the lifts and hand controls serviced and in working condition."

Roos does most of the harvesting on the family's 1,750 acres, most of the field cultivating and wheat drilling — and anything else he can do while seated.

Today he relies on the Illinois Easter Seal Society's AgrAbility Unlimited program, administered by Duane Brusnighan, for information on the latest technology for disabled farmers. "Duane is sort of the 'info box' that helps us get together, share our experiences and find the equipment we need to keep farming."

Roos says he's also willing to talk to anyone who needs help making the transition back to farming after an accident. "I could give a guy a lot of ideas on elevators or machinery — or just basically how to cope with it all," he says. "It sometimes helps a great deal just to be able to talk to someone."

And even for those who don't have a disability, it also helps to see how others cope with challenges many of us might think impossible to overcome.

You can write to Roos at R.R. #2, Box 274, Havana, IL 62644. AgrAbility Unlimited can be reached by calling 1-800-525-0067. □

HARVESTING INDEPENDENCE

The Breaking New Ground Resource Center and the AgrAbility Project are planting seeds of inspiration nationwide for farmers with disabilities.

By Scott Whitman and Dean Brusnighan, M.S.

Like many farmers, Danny Moesner worries about the price of corn, whether there will be enough rain (or too much), or if milk prices will drop next week. In many ways, though, the challenges he faces are very different. Danny is a farmer with quadriplegia, the result of a C-5/6 spinal cord injury he sustained in an auto accident in May, 1991, while on his way to do the 3 a.m. milking at the family dairy farm near Dale, Ind.

In the early morning darkness, Danny did not see the four large horses that were standing in the road, nor was he able to avoid the collision when one of them jumped in a desperate attempt to avoid his oncoming vehicle. Within seconds, the 2,000-pound animal had landed on top of the pickup truck, crushing the roof and fracturing one of Danny's cervical vertebrae.

Though the circumstances of his accident are unique, the end result is all too common. Danny is just one of approximately 300 farmers and

ranchers who sustain a spinal cord injury each year.

Contrary to the common belief that farmers and ranchers must have tough hands and a strong back to survive, many people with severe disabilities own and operate successful agricultural enterprises. In fact, it's estimated that over 500,000 farm and ranch family members and agricultural workers in the United States have physical impairments that hinder them in their daily work activities.

Most of these individuals wish to continue working as productive mem-

bers of the agricultural community. All too often, though, they are frustrated in their attempts. Rural isolation, limited personal resources, gaps in rural service and rehabilitation delivery systems, and inadequate access to traditional agriculture-oriented assistance are among the many obstacles they face.

One organization working to overcome these obstacles is the Breaking New Ground (BNG) Resource Center in West Lafayette, Ind. Operated by Purdue University's Department of Agricultural Engineering, BNG is dedi-

Home makeover alterations such as a cut-out under the kitchen sink help Danny Moesner perform a variety of once-difficult tasks.

cated to helping farmers, ranchers and their families pursue their chosen occupation and rural lifestyle following a disabling injury or disease. For over 14 years, the BNG Resource Center (and more recently, the BNG Outreach Program) has assisted thousands of people with disabling conditions, including spinal cord injuries, amputations, arthritis, stroke, back injuries and visual or hearing impairments.

BNG got its start when the program's director, Bill Field, Ed.D., a professor of agricultural engineering at Purdue, was contacted in 1979 by a

farmer with paraplegia who needed assistance in modifying a farm tractor. Since that time, the staff has grown to include six full-time specialists, a rural assistive technology specialist, an information specialist, a rural rehabilitation specialist, an administrative assistant, and the BNG Outreach Program coordinator. Numerous part-time professional staff and graduate research assistants also contribute to BNG research, outreach, and resource material development activities.

In Danny Moesner's case, BNG staff members visited him in the hospi-

tal just weeks after his accident, where they provided encouragement and shared success stories of other farmers with spinal cord injuries and severe mobility impairments.

In the months that followed, BNG staff conducted worksite assessments

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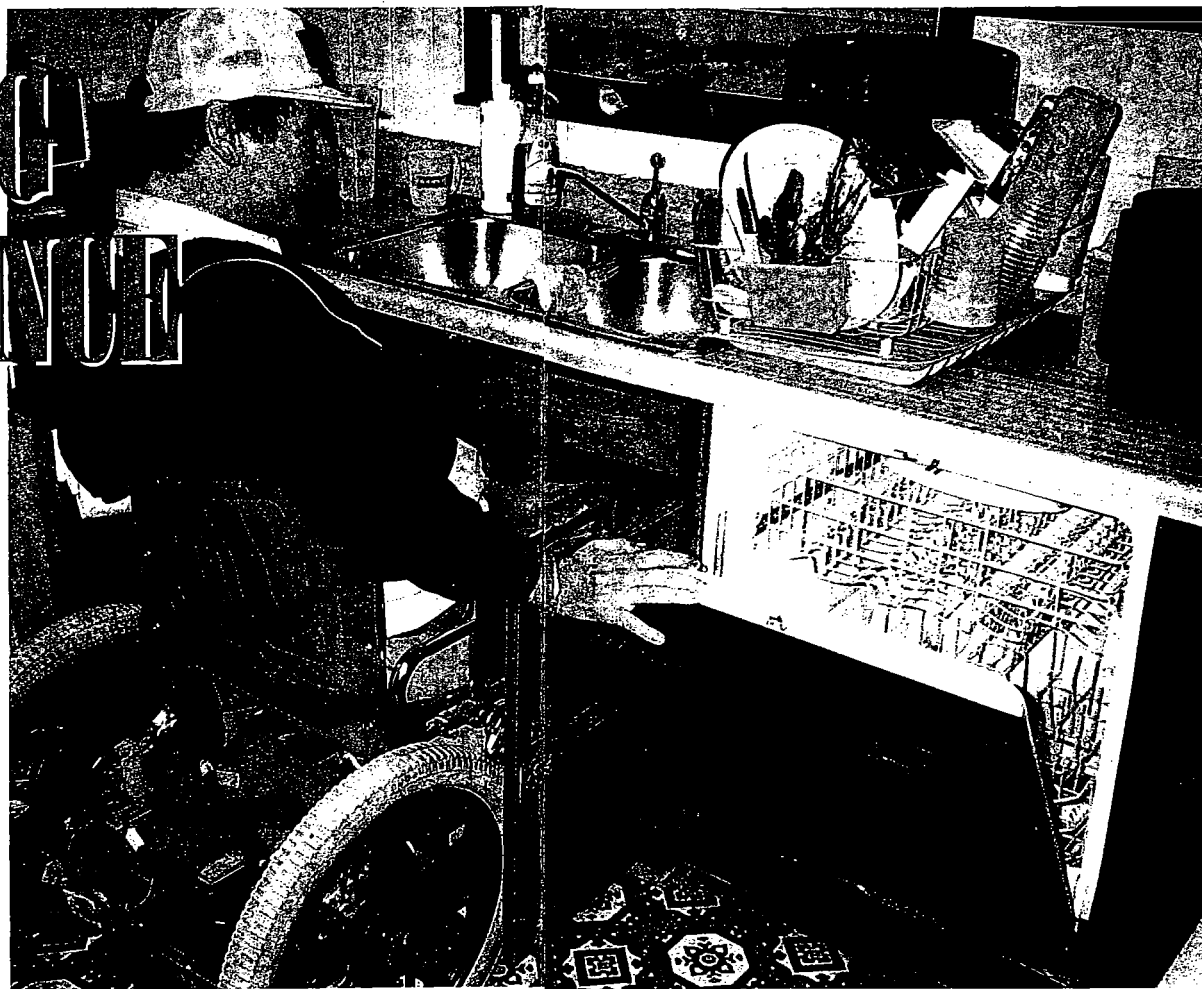


Photo courtesy Breaking New Ground Resource Center

Reaching Out

On-site services, like those provided to the Moesners, form the foundation of rural rehabilitation. As a farmer might say, "It's where the rubber meets the road." The Breaking New Ground Resource Center staff conducts between 80 and 85 farm visits and worksite assessments each year. In addition, the BNG Outreach Program, in cooperation with ATTAIN (Accessing Technology Through Awareness in Indiana), operates a rural assistive technology resource van containing adaptive aids used for farm-site demonstrations and public awareness activities.

Funding for rural assistive services and technology comes from a variety of sources. Nearly 80 to 90 percent of the assistive devices used by farmers with disabilities are constructed either by the farmers themselves or by someone in the community using materials readily available on the farm or in local shops. Other avenues of funding include private insurance, not-for-profit organizations, and state and local agencies such as vocational rehabilitation and workers compensation.

BNG's services and resources reach far beyond the farm gate. Each year, information specialist Melissa Deason and the BNG staff respond to over 1,000 inquiries from farmers, ranchers and rural professionals across the country. In addition, the BNG Resource Center produces and distributes a wide variety of materials on topics such as work-site modifications, adaptive tools, and rural independent living skills. BNG's resource library includes technical manuals, reports, and audiovisual materials designed to assist farmers and rural professionals.

The center's flagship publication is *Agricultural Tools, Equipment, Machinery and Buildings for Farmers and Ranchers with Physical Disabilities*, a resource notebook containing descriptions of hundreds of home-engineered and commercially available assistive devices and work-site adaptations. The *Breaking New Ground* newsletter, published quarterly, is delivered to more than 11,000 agricultural families and rural rehabilitation professionals throughout the U.S. and around the world. □

Harvesting Independence

Continued from page 23

to develop recommendations for increasing accessibility and improving safety practices within the Moesners' three-story home and on their 1,200-acre diversified farming operation. Though local volunteers had already added a first-floor bathroom and built a ramp onto the house, the family's living arrangements remained cumbersome at best. Danny's bed had been relocated in makeshift fashion in the dining room. To get to the family room in the basement, he had to go out the front door and travel on a narrow, steep walkway around to the back of the house.

In November 1992, a home makeover was conducted by a team that included Mary Yams, an Extension Housing Specialist from Iowa State University. BNG staff, a county extension agent, Danny's vocational rehab counselor and some local volunteers. In one day, the team supervised a logistical analysis and reorganization of rooms and furnishings. As a result, they switched the children's bedrooms, the family room and the master bedroom around so that the common areas were all located on the first floor, where Danny could access them easily.

The formal living room, for example, was turned into a master bedroom, with partitions for privacy. A framework of galvanized pipe over the bed, decorated as a canopy, provided a way for Danny to hoist himself onto the bed. The kitchen was made more accessible by creating a cutout under the sink to accommodate Danny's wheelchair, relocating appliances and installing roll-away bins under an accessible counter.

This one-day process provided a relatively simple, low-cost and low-tech solution to what had become a serious obstacle to the family's lifestyle.

BNG also provided information to enable Danny to select mobility aids suitable for the rough conditions and terrain on his farm. The Steven Motor Chair, a three-wheeled, all-terrain vehicle, was chosen as his primary farm mobility aid. Plans are also underway to modify a Haul Master three-wheeled utility vehicle for the more rugged mobility demands of the field. A roll cage and wider floorboard will be added to enhance safety and facilitate transfers.

Although these days Danny's work method has changed from do-it-yourself to that of a delegation-oriented manager, he still

takes on a share of the field work. Using a chair lift, he can access his combine, though temperature adaptation problems and fatigue prevent him from working in the field for more than three or four hours at a time.

The BNG staff is currently working with Indiana's Vocational Rehabilitation agency to locate and fund a Versa-Lift from AmeriPower, and hand control modifications to allow Danny to safely access and operate one of his farm tractors.

Note:

The products mentioned represent only a sample of the many mobility and adaptive aids available. Their mention here does not constitute an endorsement by Breaking New Ground or Purdue University. For more information on these or about other rural assistive technology, contact the BNG Resource Center.

Scott Whitman is a research assistant and technical writer for Breaking New Ground. Dean Boushgan, M.S., is a rehabilitation engineer and Breaking New Ground's Rural Assistive Technology Specialist.

Breaking New Ground Resource Center, Purdue University, 1146 Department of Agricultural Engineering, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1146; voiceltd: 800/825-4624; voiceltd: 317/494-5088.

Back In The Driver's Seat

Dan Gwin operates a large corn and soybean farm with his father in central Indiana. Despite challenging economic times, he has managed to expand his farming operation to 2,000 acres, has started a custom seed corn dealership and taken on 600 acres of custom harvesting work. What is particularly impressive is that his accomplishments have come after sustaining a severely disabling injury. In 1988, Dan fell from the bed of a semitruck. The impact shattered his vertebrae at the T-10 level and resulted in paraplegia. During his rehabilitation, Dan was encouraged to abandon farming, return to school, and prepare for a career more "appropriate" for his physical limitations. Dan, however, had different ideas. He was a farmer, and he intended to remain a farmer. He was eventually referred to the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program. BNG helped Dan locate and acquire mobility aids and adaptive devices that enabled him to safely access and operate his farming equipment and accomplish everyday work activities.

The Gwin farm is quite hilly with gravel-covered driveways, making travel difficult for Dan, especially in adverse weather conditions. BNG helped Dan modify his Yamaha Terrapro four-wheel, all-terrain vehicle, used for more extensive field mobility. The machine, equipped with a back support and seatbelt, was modified with hand controls, foot guards, and power take-off and hydraulic hook-ups (for operating a small mower).

Dan has also equipped both a farm tractor and combine with lifts to facilitate transfers from his wheelchair to the operator's seat of each vehicle. With the addition of modified hand controls and a cellular phone, he is able to accomplish almost any farm activity efficiently, safely and independently.—S.W. and D.B.



Transfer aids, such as this AmeriPower Versa-Lift, help Dan Gwin and other farmers with limited mobility to safely access farm equipment.

Photo courtesy Breaking New Ground Resource Center

AgrAbility

In response to the growing demand for services provided by programs like Breaking New Ground, Congress, through a provision in the 1990 Farm Bill, authorized the creation of a network of rural resource centers called the AgrAbility Project. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service administers the AgrAbility Project in collaboration with the National Easter Seal Society and Purdue's Breaking New Ground Resource Center.

These national program partners provide training, technical assistance and disseminate information to support state-level projects. They also give out information on agriculture and disability to individuals and groups nationwide. Individual programs combine the resources of each state's Extension Service with private, nonprofit disability service organizations for family assistance.

Over the past three years, 14 AgrAbility project grants have been awarded in 16 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana and Idaho, North Dakota, New York, South Carolina, Vermont and New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Kentucky. AgrAbility works to help agricultural workers with disabilities find solutions by linking them to a network of engineers, health and rehabilitation service providers, agricultural experts, product manufacturers and suppliers, educators, skilled tradesmen, and other rural resources. The AgrAbility project staff assists individuals and families by assessing agricultural work sites and suggesting modifications and equipment adaptations. Staff specialists also mobilize community resources, facilitate rural independent living, coordinate peer support groups, and promote safety and secondary injury prevention. In short, AgrAbility becomes an advocate for the individuals and families served by the project.

Generally, farmers and ranchers, like most people who experience a disabling injury or disease, want to continue working and living their life as they always have. Rehabilitation professionals have the opportunity to help farm and ranch families achieve these goals. Working together with rural rehabilitation programs like the AgrAbility Project and the Breaking New Ground Resource Center, rehabilitation professionals can cultivate independence, helping people like Danny Moesner get back to doing what they do best—worrying about

the price of corn, watching for rain, and producing the bountiful harvest we all enjoy.—S.W. and D.B.

For a current list of state AgrAbility projects or other information, contact the AgrAbility project at the BNG Resource Center or the following organizations:

AgrAbility Project, USDA Extension Service, Room 3344, South Building, Fourteenth Street & Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-0900; 202/720-5285; tdd: 202/720-4111.

AgrAbility Project, National Easter Seal Society, 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 915, Washington, DC 20005; 202/347-3066; tdd: 202/347-7385.

'Down under' counselor studies programs for disabled farmers

By Kay Shipman

Australian farmers coping with disabilities may soon benefit from ideas that aid their counterparts in Illinois.

Cameron Wright, a rehabilitation counselor with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service in Queensland, Australia,

is studying programs for disabled American farmers with hopes of transplanting new ideas to Australian soil.

Wright wants to work with Australia's rural doctors so the first advice disabled farmers hear isn't "give up the farm, mate."

Wright heard about AgrAbility Unlimited and tracked the program through the U.S. consulate to several locations, including Illinois.

Illinois Easter Seal Society's AgrAbility Unlimited program offers farmers, their families, or other agricultural workers with

disabilities a variety of services, including worksite and equipment modification.

Last week, Wright checked out the modifications that helped Art McReynolds, Bethany, switch from farming to working full-time as a township road commissioner in Moultrie County. After a spinal blood clot paralyzed McReynolds, he worked with Duane Brusnighan of AgrAbility Unlimited.

WRIGHT'S GOAL isn't to have all disabled farmers continue farming, but to provide information on all the possibilities, he said. Commonwealth Rehabilitation is similar to the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Wright learned his country had no specific programs for disabled farmers shortly after he became a rehabilitation counselor and tried to help a farmer. That led him to research programs for disabled farmers and to eventually give presentations at several conferences. Then, someone suggested he study disabled farmer programs in the United States and develop ideas for Australia.

"It's caught a few people's imaginations," he said of the possibility of helping farmers who are isolated in a sparsely populated countryside.

HE PLANS to propose using an existing network of rehabilitation offices because a significant number are located in rural areas. He will try to get the word out via a national rural television program, rural newspapers, and Australian farm organizations.

The challenge will be a large one.

Queensland is the size of Nebraska, both Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon combined. The population is a little larger than Chicago's, but a third live in the capital, Brisbane. "The population is very spread out," Wright said. During the rainy months, some farms may be isolated for four to five months.

If Wright succeeds, Australian farmers will find assistance tailored for them.

"One of my aims is to reach farmers and tell them the commonwealth rehabilitation is as much for farmers as anyone," Wright said.



Cameron Wright, left, an Australian rehabilitation counselor, inspects adapted equipment that Art McReynolds, right, uses as Marrowbone Township road commissioner in Moultrie County. Wright has studied an American program for disabled farmers. He will write a proposal for a national program for disabled Australian farmers. McReynolds switched from farming to road work after he was paralyzed by a spinal blood clot.

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Kentucky AgrAbility

KENTUCKY AgrAbility



MAXIMIZING ABILITIES IN AGRICULTURE

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
AND
CARDINAL HILL REHABILITATION HOSPITAL
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

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Minnesota Agrability Project



MINNESOTA AGRABILITY PROJECT

For farmers, farm families and
agricultural workers with disabilities.

Sponsored by:

Minnesota Extension Service
Rural Rehab Technology, Inc.
Easter Seal Society of Minnesota

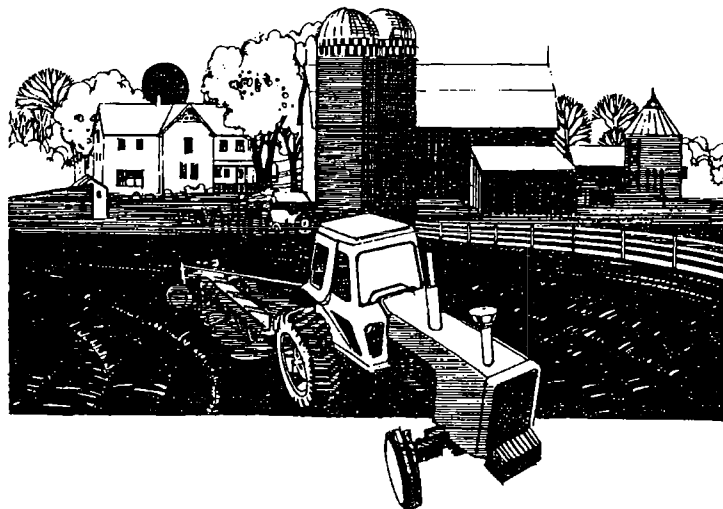
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Agriability of Wisconsin



AgrAbility
of
Wisconsin

Promoting Success in Agriculture

for People with Disabilities and Their Families



Project ACTION Update

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY
TRANSPORTATION IN OUR NATION

Fall 1994

Project ACTION National Conference Brings Hundreds to Washington, D.C.

More than 300 participants from 32 states, Puerto Rico and Australia joined Project ACTION staff and its National Steering Committee members June 5-7 in Washington, D.C., for Project ACTION's National Policy Conference. The three-day event featured in-depth discussion, face-to-face interaction and collaborative development of working solutions to transit accessibility issues and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Local, state and federal government agencies; the transit industry; and the disability community were well represented. The combination of such a diverse group of individuals working cooperatively in a national forum towards solutions was the first of its kind.

Kenneth W. Parkinson, immediate past chairman, National Easter Seal Society Board of Directors, officially opened the conference. Vincent C. Gray, director, District of Columbia Department of Human Services, delivered the Mayor's welcome and read a proclamation identifying June 5-7 as Transit Accessibility Days in the District of Columbia. Roger Tate, chief, Research and Rural Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), presided over the presentation of issues. David Capozzi, director, Office of



Project ACTION offered a variety of information at its National Policy Conference.

Technical and Information Services, Access Board, and chairman, Project ACTION's National Steering Committee, extended a hearty welcome to participants and encouraged them to share their suggestions and actively engage in the

information exchange process. Rosalyn Simon, Ph.D., director, Project ACTION, outlined the purpose, goals and objectives of the conference.

The conference focused on three primary areas: bringing together key decision-makers concerned with transit accessibility to discuss current and emerging policy issues in ADA implementation; developing solutions and recommendations to facilitate ADA implementation and improve access to transportation for persons with disabilities; and presenting

(Please turn to page 2)

**SPECIAL
CONFERENCE
EDITION**



Hundreds Attend Project ACTION Conference

(Continued from page 1)

results of local demonstration projects and current research initiatives in accessible transportation. The scope of the conference expanded as the transit and disability communities engaged in constructive fact-finding discussions, some of which took place in Project ACTION's ADA Marketplace, where exhibitors had an opportunity to display and demonstrate transit-related accessible technology. Following is a brief description of the various conference sessions:

Access to Intermodalism

The first of two days of forums, roundtables and plenary sessions began with a detailed discussion of "Access to Intermodalism," as outlined by Michael Winter, special assistant to the associate

deputy secretary and director, Office of Intermodalism, U.S. Department of Transportation. Intermodalism, as described by Winter, is a shift in the way the federal government does business as it relates to transportation, one which advocates full integration and continuation of the existing national transportation systems for maximum efficiency.

Winter reported that U.S. Transportation Secretary Peña has developed and is actively implementing a strategic plan for improving transportation from the customer's perspective. The goals are as follows: tie America together through an effective intermodal transportation system; invest strategically in transportation infrastructure; create a new alliance between transportation and new technology; continue to promote

safe and secure transportation; actively enhance our environment; put people first by making transportation relevant and accessible to them; and transform the Department of Transportation by placing more emphasis on employees.

Federal Perspective on ADA Implementation

Grace Crunican, deputy administrator, Federal Transit Administration, addressed the federal perspective on ADA implementation. Crunican noted

Project ACTION Steering Committee

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
American Public Transit Association
Community Transportation Association of America
International Taxicab and Livery Association
American Bus Association
National Easter Seal Society
Lift-U
Paralyzed Veterans of America
U.S. Department of Transportation
American Foundation for the Blind
American Association of Retired Persons

Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation) is administered by the National Easter Seal Society under a cooperative agreement with the Federal Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.



James E. Williams Jr., President and CEO

Rosalyn Simon, Director, Project ACTION

Editor:
Jay Becker, Director of Publications

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the important linkage between the conference issues and how they fit into FTA's broader concept of what it calls "liveable communities."

She also provided a status report on ADA compliance with regard to transit accessibility. According to Crunican, 540 transit systems provide fixed route service. Only 54 of the paratransit plans submitted in 1992 were disapproved; more than 100 of the 540 transit operators are in full compliance and 100 more report that they will be in full compliance by the end of 1994. Thirty-three transit properties operate rail; 700 key stations have been identified, with 300 in full ADA compliance (time extensions were requested for 400 of those stations and 116 were rejected). Estimated cost of key station accessibility is \$907 million. Three to four thousand buses have been funded by FTA and as a result, 50 percent of the national bus fleet is now accessible.

Crunican also emphasized FTA's participation in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Coordinating Council. Although Medicare, Medicaid, the aging programs, Head Start, and AIDS programs are administered by DHHS, each has its own specific authorizing legislation. FTA is working to eliminate the costs of those special transportation trips that

could be provided more efficiently by the transit system. Crunican asked DHHS to allocate its non-emergency transportation funds to the transit provider who in turn will use these funds to improve accessibility to all trip purposes; that is, social, work, and education, in addition to medical trips.

Framing the Issues: Survey Results

Research is a critical element in achieving 100 percent transit accessibility by 1997, said Lawrence Schulman, associate administrator for technical assistance and safety, Federal Transit Administration. Project ACTION has taken an aggressive approach in developing, funding and supporting accessibility research initiatives through the National Institute for Accessible Transportation (NIAT).

"The Stakeholders' Forum: Taking the Pulse in Representative American Communities to Measure How ADA Compliance in Public Transportation is Going" is one of the research initiatives sponsored by the Institute and conducted by Ronald J. Hartman, RTKL, Inc. Hartman spoke with people who have a stake in how effectively the legal mandate is met. Key issues raised include: cost component of implementing the ADA; view of the ADA as one more federal mandate without financial

resources to sustain it; ADA planning processes are not integrated into local and state budget processes; timelines for modifications in rail systems may not be realistic; and the ADA is too prescriptive and leaves little room for cooperation in developing optimal solutions to local problems.

Dr. Clementine Morris, director of community services, Transit Authority of River City, in conjunction with Cass Irvin, president, Access to the Arts, conducted another NIAT-sponsored survey, "Attitudes of Transit Personnel and People with Disabilities Toward Public Transit Accessibility."

Service delivery concerns of the transit personnel were compared to those of the consumers. The initial data analysis is based on the results of 410 mailed surveys from a stratified random sample of transit personnel and 194 selected public transit consumers. The public transit consumers perceived accessible public transit equipment as both unreliable and poorly maintained. A greater number of transit personnel agreed that transit services for people with disabilities should be provided using small buses and lift-equipped vans.

Other federal and research organizations are also investing

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Project ACTION Conference in Washington, D.C.

(Continued from page 3)

time and resources on transit accessibility research. Gary L. Jones, assistant director of transportation issues, U.S. General Accounting Office, conducted a Congressionally mandated study, "Americans with Disabilities Act: Challenges Faced by Transit Agencies in Complying with the Acts Requirements." "Research revealed that the number one problem among transit providers regarding ADA is securing the financial resources to provide all eligible trips," said Jones. In addition to overcoming capacity constraints, meeting the criteria may require agencies to expand their days and hours of operation; reduce travel times; improve

timeliness; and provide more convenient reservation systems.

The Transportation Research Board's Transit Cooperative Research Program is also funding several initiatives to improve transit accessibility, according to Stephanie Robinson, project manager. In addition to funding Project ACTION, FTA's major transit accessibility initiative is the development of the bus of the future, Advanced Technology Transit Bus. "This is the forerunner of transit buses in America — at least we hope it will be," said Schulman. Vincent DeMarco, former deputy director, Office of Engineering, FTA, reemphasized FTA's commitment to developing accessible transportation. He noted that

low-floor buses are a huge research priority and will go a long way in decreasing drive time.

Comments from the Federal Transit Administrator

Curt Decker, executive director, National Association for Protection and Advocacy Systems, introduced FTA Administrator Gordon Linton, who served as the keynote luncheon speaker on Monday. "Project ACTION is probably one of the most successful research and development efforts that FTA has been involved in and the \$2 million a year earmarked for this project has probably been some of the best spent money," said Linton. He also noted that when we discuss transportation, it's not

Problems and Recommendations

Paratransit

Problem: Excessive number of no-shows and cancellations; possibly due to the regulatory requirement for 14-day advance reservation.

Recommendation: Reduce advance registration from 14 days to 3-7 days.

Problem: Must consider needs beyond the ADA's limited civil rights approach to transportation needs. For example, rural areas outside the 3/4-mile corridor and

individuals who do not meet ADA's eligibility criteria.

Recommendation: New legislation supporting a broader type of paratransit services and policy which focuses more on mobility.

Problem: Regulations only allow suspension of service for "no-shows."

Recommendation: DOT rulemaking to allow suspension of service for excessive cancellations.

Problem: Paratransit fares that are twice the base fare can be excessive.

Recommendation: Reconsider fare criteria in the regulations.

Problem: Regulations provide conflicting guidance on visitors' rights.

Recommendation: Review, revision and clarification are needed on visitors' rights.



just about rail, buses, engines, glass, steel, or concrete, but more about people. "I would hope that in our implementation of the ADA, we accomplish two things: make sure we provide accessibility over and beyond the spirit of the law; and make sure that all of us involved in this effort realize that we need to join together and do it as cost effective as possible."

ADA Stakeholders Forum

Presenters from the disability and transit communities included: John K. Gaffney, Katherine McGuinness and Associates; Eddie Espinosa, Reelife Solutions; Eddie Rivas, CTAA; Marilyn Golden, Disability Rights, Education and Defense Fund; Paul Schroeder, American Council of the Blind; J. Barry Barker,

Metro Regional Transit Authority; Charles Carr, Mississippi Department of Transportation; Randy Isaacs, Isaacs & Associates; The Honorable Harold Moss; Tacoma, Wash.; James E. Rooney, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; and Eileen Teachout, Central New York Regional Transportation Authority.

Highlights of the disability community's perspective included:

- Top-to-bottom commitment is needed from transit providers and consumers
- Eligibility — people with disabilities must take responsibility and learn their rights as outlined in the ADA
- Consumers are encouraged to work with transit providers in ADA implementation by participating in the planning process

• There is an enormous amount of good activity, but simultaneously, there is far too much waffling, evasion and recalcitrance in too many places

• Senior citizens are concerned about displacement on transit vehicles and are afraid that because of the ADA, they won't receive the services they rely on and are used to

• The ADA and the Older Americans Act don't clash, they just don't have anything to do with each other

• People who are blind and visually impaired ought to be leading the charge to build a real transportation environment

• Fixed route allows more independence, however, we must recognize that it doesn't serve all of the people all of the time and it

(Please turn to page 6)

Problems and Recommendations

Problem: The regulation that allows a one-hour scheduling window is confusing as written, and difficult to administer in some situations.

Recommendation: Need clearer and more implementable language on scheduling window.

Problem: Determinations are being made which are not functional in nature and that do not support the spirit and intent of the ADA.

Recommendation: More guidance, technology sharing and training on eligibility.

Problem: Needs of people with visual disabilities are not being adequately considered in terms of spatial and orientation issues and in navigating the system.

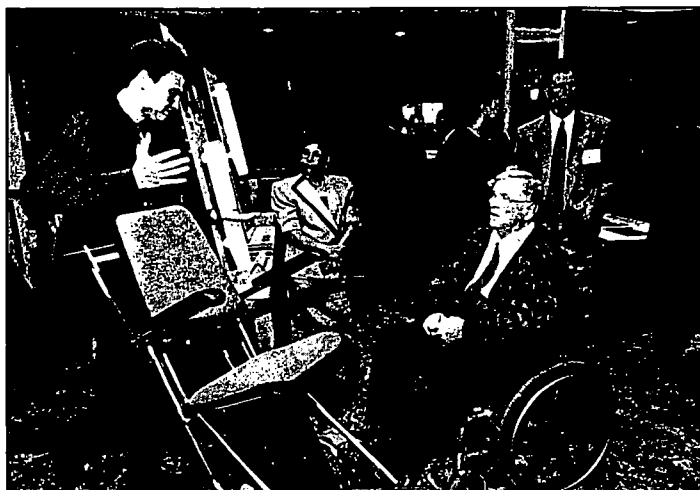
Recommendation: More guidance. Transit systems could work with mobility trainers to get the word out that function is defined more broadly than physical disability.

Problem: Transit agencies do not understand the types of professionals necessary for conducting eligibility determinations.

Recommendation: Projects to educate transit about independent living, rehabilitation and medical professions.

Problem: Need process to better evaluate persons with multiple disabilities.

(Please turn to page 6)



Project ACTION National Policy Conference

(Continued from page 5)

never will.

Highlights from the transit community's perspective are:

- ADA advisory committees have been an essential part of our planning process
- Have experienced increased operating costs, doubled the number of vehicles and peak hour requirements have tripled
- ADA has reduced the available operating and capital funds allocated for routine expansion because of the requirement to purchase ADA-accessible equipment
- Reluctance from consumers to participate on advisory committees or attend public hearings because of past actions of previous administrations

- Over-the-road bus industry is concerned about the ADA requirements that every new over-the-road bus acquired 30 days after ADA enactment be lift-equipped

- Concerned about accessible lavatory on over-the-road buses and the loss of passenger seating
 - The ABA has conducted regional ADA seminars nationwide and assisted in the development of an ADA private transportation handbook

- Cities and transit departments would be very wise if they would go ahead and spend the necessary funds to ensure that their systems are accessible, says an elected official (Mayor) who also sits on the local transit board in his city

- Sensitivity training is a key element in accessibility, whether it's transit operators or employees working in an office environment

- Large multi-modal system says it estimates that it will cost about \$1 billion between fiscal 1993 and the year 2011 to meet the rail requirements of the ADA

- One of the largest barriers regarding accessibility is attitudes, says an advocate for people with disabilities as well as a member of the board of a mid-size transit authority

- People must get involved in the process if they want their interests to be fully represented.

Working Towards Solutions: Legislative Update

Len Simon of Simon & Associates.

Problems and Recommendations

(Continued from page 5)

Recommendation: Technology sharing.

Problem: Operators' inability to interpret and apply information on eligibility application and make eligibility determinations.

Recommendation: Development of better reviewer guidelines.

Problem: Displacement and/or reduction in level of service for senior citizens.

Recommendation: Better cooperation between elderly and disability communities; Project ACTION could develop and demonstrate some local cooperative efforts; dissemination of information about local models that promote cooperative efforts.

Problem: Referral of human service clients to public transit without the provision of existing funds.

Recommendation: Distribute

guidelines of federal requirements for both planning and coordination within both the transit and human service industries.

Problem: Wording of certification required from the transit system for Section 16 funding creates an adversarial relationship between the human service agency and the transit system.

Recommendation: Review wording and revise appropriately.



a Washington, D.C.-based transportation policy consulting firm, provided a legislative history and update on transportation legislation and the possible future of Project ACTION. He emphasized the commitment and contributions of Roger Slagle, House Public Works and Transportation Committee; Pat McCann, Senate Transportation Appropriations Committee; Rep. Norman Mineta, chairman, House Public Works and Transportation Committee; Sen. Frank Lautenberg, chairman, Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee; and countless others.

Simon highlighted three areas that are currently competing for Congress' attention — budget, elections and mandates. He said that budget caps are tight and we

find ourselves competing with housing, community and economic development as well as the environment, all representing approximately 15 to 20 percent of the total budget.

He also noted that because there have been various programs throughout the years where the growth in cost has been so phenomenal for local and state governments, we are faced with a "backwash" pool and are fighting to keep ADA free of that same stigma.

Simon indicated that as the members of Congress change as a result of elections, so may the tide of various pieces of legislation. "What I feel we lack — and you might find this ironic since probably 60 to 80 percent of you in the audience consider yourselves advocates — in

Congress is not votes, but advocates."

Randall L. Rutta, vice president, government relations, and Joseph P. Romer, senior vice president, public affairs, National Easter Seal Society, provided additional information and comments on the legislative climate regarding Project ACTION and accessible transportation for people with disabilities.

Concurrent Group Sessions: Disability and Transit Communities Interact

Project ACTION held concurrent group sessions to allow for constructive, candid and forthright discussions on accessibility between the disability and transit communities in a small personal

(Please turn to page 8)

Problems and Recommendations

Problem: Public education resources are not coordinated with either transit or other human service programs.

Recommendation: Investigate coordination possibilities.

Problem: Lack of adequate outreach and public participation.

Recommendation: Additional guidance and information, technology sharing and training.

Problem: Lack of information and guidance on the feasibility of implementing trip-by-trip determinations.

Recommendation: Project ACTION could sponsor research on cost-effective, realistic approaches to trip-by-trip determinations and share information.

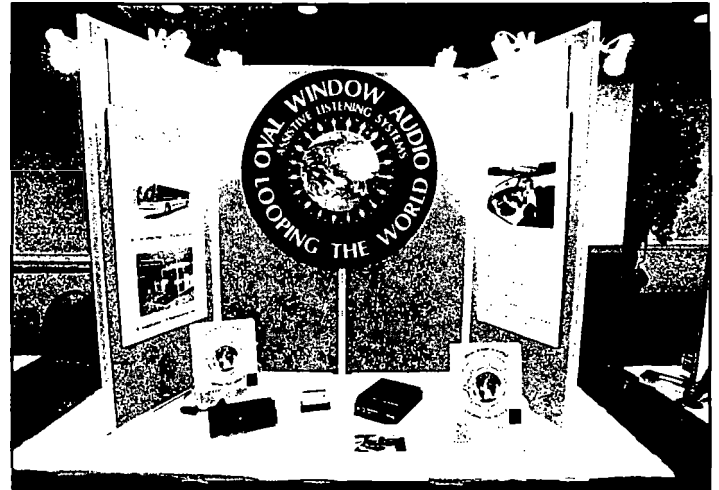
Problem: Lack of information and data that transit managers can use for decision making: i.e., curb- to-curb versus door-to-door service.

Recommendation: Research and information sharing.

Problem: Management of demand — transitioning users from paratransit to fixed route service.

Problem: Inadequate emergency evacuation policies for paratransit systems.

(Please turn to page 8)



Project ACTION National Policy Conference

(Continued from page 7)

setting. David Cyra, director of outreach and continuing education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, served as moderator for the large-group session.

Each small-group session was assigned a facilitator and a recorder. Session themes included: Paratransit, Fixed Route, Rail, Private Sector, and Compliance. Facilitators, recorders and resource representatives included: William Henderson, Senior Services of Snohomish County; Russell Thatcher, EG&G Dynatrend; Gary DeLorme, FTA; Donald Smith, Lift-U; Deborah Dubin, American Public Transit Association; Irv Chor, FTA; James E. Rooney, Massachusetts Bay

Transportation Authority; Alan Dinsmore, American Foundation for the Blind; Ramon Lopez, FTA; Al LaGasse, International Taxicab & Livery Association; Randy Isaccs, Isaccs & Associates, Paul Marx, FTA; Maureen McCloskey, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Thomas Cox, American Association of Retired Persons; and Susan Schruth, FTA. The small-group discussions highlighted numerous problems and recommendations.

Federal Roundtable Dialogue

The federal roundtable discussion afforded both consumers and transit providers the opportunity to ask questions of the federal representatives whose responsibilities include the

implementation of transit accessibility issues. Moderated by Edward Gill Jr., assistant chief counsel and executive director of regulatory affairs, American Public Transit Association, the discussion was structured to provide an equal exchange of ideas and information. Experts on hand included Robert Ashby, deputy assistant general counsel for regulation and enforcement, DOT; Dennis Cannon, transportation specialist, Access Board; Vincent DeMarco, former deputy director, Office of Engineering, FTA; and Diane McSwain, transportation specialist, Health & Human Services.

Discussions focused on the following issues: ADA compliance by 1997 — tactile warning strips,

Problems and Recommendations

(Continued from page 7)

Recommendation: Research and guidance.

Problem: High turnover of paratransit drivers which causes many operation problems.

Recommendation: Locally, evaluate the pay scale relative to fixed route.

Problem: More definitive population and demand information needed.

Recommendation: Investigate adding questions to the U.S. Census to obtain information about the disability community.

Problem: Inadequate computer software to fully implement ADA paratransit requirements.

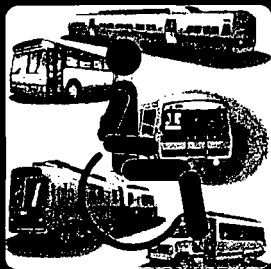
Recommendation: Investigate cooperative product development efforts in areas of scheduling and customer information; apply GPS to the industry and maintenance of vehicles; better independent

evaluation of software products; better information sharing and development of projects on new technologies.

Problem: Vehicle design that allows for adequate evacuation is needed.

Recommendation: Develop vehicle specifications and design, as well as operating policies that address emergency evacuation issues.

Problem: Need for outreach and public participation.



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FTA REGULATORY INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE ON FEBBS COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD NETWORK

Transit providers and the general public now have access to current Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations and industry news through **FEBBS**, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Electronic Bulletin Board System. In addition, information related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is available on FEBBS. This on-line information system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by dialing up FEBBS via a personal computer (IBM PC or Apple-based) installed with communication software and modem. Donna Avallone, the FEBBS Systems Operator (SYSOP), estimates that there are now 2,100 registered users of this government-sponsored information resource.

What is FEBBS?

FEBBS is a menu-driven electronic bulletin board operated and maintained by the FHWA of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC. FEBBS was established in 1988 for the purpose of sharing highway regulatory information nationwide with all interested individuals in the field of national surface transportation. Now the FTA joins with FHWA in providing important information to transit authority personnel (employed by light railways and motor carriers of passengers) and other interested individuals throughout the country, primarily via a modem. The FHWA and the FTA are pleased to offer this information on the FEBBS, allowing many people with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments, to obtain regulatory and transportation information in this accessible form.

FTA FEATURES NOW AVAILABLE ON FEBBS :

1. ADA Related Regulations:

- Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities Part IV.
- Final Rule: 49 CFR Parts 27, 37 and 38, dated September 6, 1991.

2. ADA Related Publications:

- Accessibility Handbook for Transit Facilities.
- Guideline Specifications for Passive Lifts, Active Lifts, Wheelchair Ramps and Securement Devices.
- Guidelines for Improvements to Transit Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.
- Suggestions for Implementing a Standee-on-lift Program for Fixed-Route Bus Service.

Access to FEBBS

Access to FEBBS is available through dial-up telephone service and through the Internet. Each access method requires your computer to be equipped with the appropriate communication software and connection device (modem and telephone line, or wide-area network interface).

Access through the Internet

The Internet is a nationwide computer networking system, through which users can obtain information from a variety of sources. To get to FEBBS via the Internet, one can GOPHER to **gopher.dot.gov**. "Gopher" is a service that locates and retrieves information. It requires software on your computer, or on the computer of an "Internet Access Provider" (IAP). IAPs include services like CompuServe, America Online, and The World. If you have an account with an IAP, use the instructions provided by the IAP to connect to their service, then use their GOPHER command to obtain access to FEBBS through **gopher.dot.gov**. Whether you get there directly or through an IAP, a menu will appear, listing the DOT bulletin board systems. Attach to FHWA through this menu choice.

Access by Modem (Dial-Up)

To access FEBBS, your computer must be connected to the telephone system through a modem, and must have communication software (such as Procomm, Crosstalk, or SmartComm) installed and configured. Use the "setup" feature of your communication software to call FEBBS using **8-bit words, one stop bit, no parity checking, and full duplex operation**. Set the default download protocol as XMODEM.

Use the phone number that is appropriate for the speed of your modem:

2400 or 9600 baud **202-366-3175** (local Washington, DC)
2400 or 9600 baud **800-337-3492** (nationwide toll-free access)
14.4 Baud only **202-366-3764** (local Washington, DC)

After the modem's sounds indicate that it has connected to FEBBS, press the RETURN key once. The FEBBS login prompt will appear on your computer's display.

Logging-on and Registering

Whether you connect through the Internet or dial-up, the first display from FEBBS is the login prompt. You will be prompted to enter your first name, last name, and the city and state from where you are calling. Next, select the number of characters per line on your display screen (usually 80), and the type of display you are using (IBM PC or VT-100) press RETURN if you are using a TTY. Then answer a few more questions about your terminal—press RETURN for questions you do not understand.

As a first-time user, you must choose a password consisting of letters and numbers (no tabs or punctuation marks), four to eight characters in length. Remember this password. Write it down where you will find it. You will need your password to use FEBBS again. Next register as a user, providing your name, job title, phone number, organization, and address. Also, remember to leave a message indicating you are a new user when you leave FEBBS.

After registering, FEBBS will display its main menu, shown on the next page:

Note: If you have a computer and a modem capable of receiving at 2400 or 9600 baud, please connect to: Telephone Number: **(202) 366-3175**
TOLL FREE ACCESS is available at: **1-800-337-FHWA (3492)**

GLOSSARY OF FEBBS TERMS:

BBS Generically, a Bulletin Board System. A dial-in computer-based system for access to files, mail, etc.

Bulletin [On FEBBS] A text file posted by a SYSOP (systems operator) with information for users. Bulletins are usually called up by pressing from the Conference Menu.

Conference A sub-area of the Bulletin Board System (BBS) with its own menus, files, and SYSOP.

Message Board An area of the BBS where mail can be exchanged and/or messages posted. In an E-Mail board, all messages are private: in a Standard Board, both public and private messages are allowed. FEBBS has a main message board (MAILBOX) and some conference sections have separate boards.

Protocol A way for computers to agree to exchange files (e.g., XMODEM).

SYSOP Short for System Operator. The person who controls the bulletin board. In FEBBS, each Conference section (of the BBS) will have a SYSOP.

Upload To transmit a file from the caller's computer to other individuals registered on the FEBBS system. The opposite of Download.

XMODEM A widely used file transfer protocol for exchanging binary files (see Protocol). TBS (The Bread Board System) supports XMODEM, making it the protocol of choice.

FHWA ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD
CONFERENCE LIST APRIL 1992
(p)=public access allowed (m)=section with message board

MAIN MENU

<O>..... Questions and Answers on ISTE A (p,m)
<X>IS..... Executive Information Section (Restricted) (m)
<N>TP..... NTP STAA '91 Briefing Schedule (Restricted)

ulletins..... General information & notices of new features (p)
<I>nfo..... System Information and Help Files (p)
<M>ail..... Person-to-person Electronic Mail (p,m)
<O>pen Forum..... Public Messages & Discussions of FHWA Activities (p,m)
<T>ech Talk..... Public Discussions about Computers & Related Topics (p,m)
<R>ead..... Check all Conference Message Boards (p,m)
<L>og..... Lists Previous Callers (p)
<Y>ell..... Pages the SYSOP (p)
<G>oodbye..... (m)
<U>ser Profile:.. Password, Terminal Characteristics (p)
</>..... Chat Online with Other Users (p)
<I>..... SYSOPs Conference (m)
<C>onferences.. Special Topics Organized by Program Area

MAIN MENU

FEBBS COMMANDS

FEBBS has a consistent command structure. These instructions are common to all of the menu driven programs in FEBBS.

To return to the previous menu : **Press <+>**
To return to the Main Menu: **Press <->**

For example, to get to the Federal Transit Administration Conference (after logging on) a user would make the following selections:

Main Menu - **Select <C> Conference**
Conferences Menu- **Select <T> Federal Transit Administration Conference**
Type selection, or <L> for list

In addition, all Conference menus have a common structure, using one-key commands: You need only enter the single key, not the < > symbols.

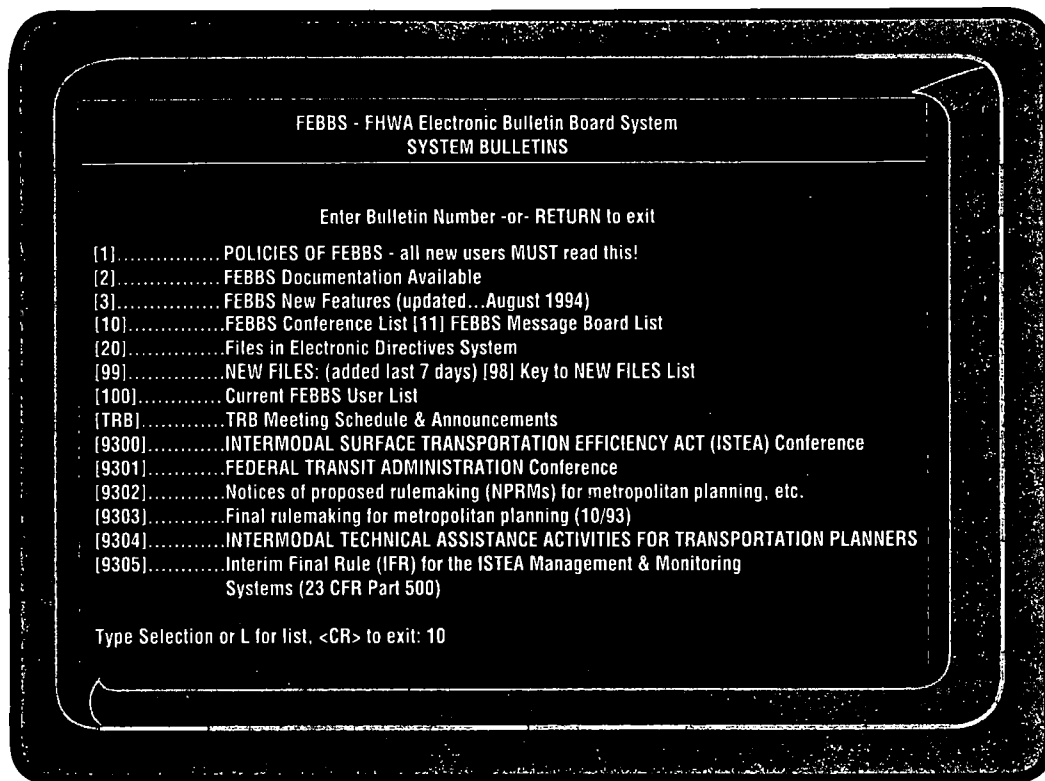
If there are further questions about the structure, connectivity, registration, or procedure about the FEBBS system please call the SYSOP.

Ms. Donna Avallone, at telephone number: (202) 366-9037.

She will be pleased to assist new registrants of the FEBBS and users of the FTA electronic bulletin board system.

For questions related to the FTA conference bulletin board, please contact:

Ms. Nancy Solkowski, at telephone number: (202) 366-0124



SYSTEM BULLETINS

To download data to your CPU, choose key **<D>** from the options listed at the bottom of the screen. Enter the exact name of the file you wish to download. Select **XMODEM** (4) protocol, then invoke the specific software instruction to **RECEIVE** or download a file. Indicate the destination.

e.g.: **a:routsym.zip**. The file will be then copied to that destination. Press return to exit.

Note: Most FEBBS files are compressed. The file type (final 3 character of name after the dot) of these compressed files is ZIP. You will need a PK UNZIP utility to expand the downloaded file on your computer, before you can use it.

CONFERENCES

Most of the FTA and ADA information in FEBBS will be found in the conference menus. Each conference will have its own bulletins and files (available for downloading only). As a new user, review these procedures to access, log in and exit the FEBBS.

LEAVING FEBBS

To exit FEBBS completely follow these directions:

Press **<G>** for Good-bye, then press **<L>** for Logoff

After exiting from FEBBS, use your own software-specific instructions to exit and return to your regular menu.

First time users are asked "Leave a message for the SYSOP?". Please use this opportunity to notify the System Operator that you are a new user who has registered, so that you will promptly be granted the appropriate level of access privileges for other sections of the FEBBS menu.

one car per train rule and paratransit service; how transit systems are planning to pay for ADA full implementation (FTA estimates that by 1997, the cost to provide complimentary paratransit service will be \$700 million annually); the coordinating efforts of HHS and DOT in addressing the issue of "client shedding" and how to best address this issue together; and the delay in rulemaking regarding over-the-road buses.

Closing Plenary Session

The closing plenary session addressed the comments, questions and basic discussions that were generated in the morning small-group sessions. Facilitators from those sessions highlighted the issues — fixed

route, rail paratransit, private sector, and compliance — and answered questions at the closing plenary session. A list of the problems and recommendations that were outlined in the sessions begins on page 4.

Dr. Simon of Project ACTION delivered the conference's closing remarks, thanking participants and encouraging them to challenge each other in the global efforts of accessible transportation for persons with disabilities. She emphasized the importance of partnerships between the transit and disability communities, the critical commitment to the implementation of the ADA and the building of fundamental coalitions whose primary mission must be to promote accessibility nationwide.

Congressional Awards Banquet

Project ACTION presented its 1994 Outstanding Congressional Leadership Award to Sen. Frank D. Lautenberg (D-NJ) on the last evening of the conference. Sen. Lautenberg has been a long-time advocate for accessible transportation for people with disabilities. He has worked tirelessly in the Senate and in his home state of New Jersey with transit systems and human service organizations in building strong alliances bound by the central theme of cooperation and commitment to ADA implementation.

For more information, contact Project ACTION, 1350 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 613, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 347-3066 or (800) 659-NIAT.

Problems and Recommendations

Recommendation: Consumers should begin to participate in the planning and implementation process.

Problem: Lack of understanding of ADA paratransit requirements, operational and planning issues by passengers and prospective passengers.

Recommendation: Provide more information and training on ADA paratransit requirements; educate senior citizens and the disability community on the effect of no-shows and cancellations; affect passengers' paratransit travel behavior by educating and training young persons and students on independent travel.

Problem: Need for greater awareness and sensitivity and improved training of transit personnel.

Recommendation: Train to proficiency and conduct refresher training.

Fixed Route

Problem: Lift failure is greatest fear for riders with disabilities;

securement systems and lifts are not user-friendly.

Recommendation: Utilize outreach efforts to demonstrate the reliability of current lifts.

Problem: Communication equipment is old and messages are garbled, rendering them ineffective.

Recommendation: Transit operators should investigate new technology; encourage word-of-mouth advertising by promoting positive experiences with fixed route services; universal design should be mandated.

Problem: Elderly passengers do not want to give up paratransit services.

Recommendation: Transit systems should develop training programs for seniors and children.

Problem: Some customers with disabilities abuse the system.

Recommendation: Penalties should be imposed for system abuses.

Problem: There are competing interests in the disability community.

Recommendation: The disability community should approach transit management with a unified voice.

Problem: If a bus picks up a person who uses a wheelchair, the driver can no longer maintain his or her fixed schedule.

Recommendation: Train the passenger to properly use the accessible equipment; train the driver to operate the equipment properly.

Problem: Bus drivers need training.

Recommendation: Include disability awareness in operator training to promote positive interactions with people with a variety of disabilities.

Problem: Bus operators are not announcing stops.

Recommendation: Discipline bus operators who fail to announce
(Please turn to page 10)

Problems and Recommendations

(Continued from page 9)

stops; award operators who announce stops; educate operators on the legal ramifications of not announcing stops.

Problem: Transit systems need to market accessible services; top-level transit managers need to better understand the needs of riders with disabilities; management needs to realize that customers are customers.

Recommendation: Top-level management needs ADA and disability awareness training; transit needs to recognize that accessibility increases ridership.

Problem: Management does not know how to respond to unusual service animals.

Recommendation: Define ADA-related terms; e.g., service animal, level of driver assistance, common wheelchair, and personal care attendant.

Rail

Problem: Informational and directional signage: need for guidance, procurement of material to comply with matte finish requirement — graffiti-resistant and able to withstand routine maintenance.

Recommendation: Project ACTION or FTA could collect and assimilate the data and distribute it industry-wide.

Problem: Investigate solutions and relevance of signs and symbols for conveying information effectively.

Recommendation: Comprehensive review of existing audio technologies for conveying accessible information; coordination of transit and banking efforts in creating accessible and usable designs;

e.g., ATM machines; Project ACTION should secure research funds for the above efforts.

Problem: Passengers are insensitive and non-responsive to the travel capabilities of others using the system.

Recommendation: Transit authorities should begin to educate all passengers to be more aware of the needs of others; e.g., wheelchair etiquette at train entrances.

Problem: Transit employees fail to listen to passengers and to respond appropriately to their requests.

Recommendation: Employees need to participate in sensitivity training in which they interact with people who have varying disabilities.

Problem: Transit systems often fail to educate the passenger on how to use the system and schedules.

Recommendation: Need to indicate on the timetable the stations that are accessible; hire employees with disabilities; support the development of future employees with disabilities at the pre-service level in high schools, universities and in other transportation programs.

Problem: Need for FTA to disseminate information about the nature and number of compliance complaints and the status of these complaints.

Recommendation: Provide a statistical breakdown by nature, sources and resolutions on a regular basis.

Problem: There needs to be further regulatory guidance regarding the placement of detectable warnings at grade-level

or low-level boarding platforms, commuter rail low-level platforms and with regard to low-floor vehicles.

Recommendation: FTA should assist operators who are dealing with multi-level boarding platforms and collaborate with key stakeholders to learn where and how detectable warnings should be installed. The American Public Transit Association Committee is a good forum for bringing key stakeholders together.

Problem: Detectable pathways are needed but may be confused with detectable warnings.

Recommendation: Discuss the issue of "paths" and "travel" within rail facilities. Investigate detectable pathways (way-finding) technology.

Private Sector

Problem: Need to ensure comprehensive inclusion of communication devices and systems for people with visual and hearing disabilities.

Recommendation: Collaborative efforts among the transit industry, hearing aid manufacturers, producers of public address systems, etc., to determine how to provide effective communication in a transportation environment.

Problem: Products are being marketed as ADA-accessible by manufacturers who are not required to follow ADA-accessible equipment standards.

Recommendation: Develop a certification procedure to ensure that equipment meets ADA standards. Project ACTION should set up a committee to study the issue and develop a process for ensuring that equipment meets ADA standards.

Problem: Passengers are not

familiar with the vehicles and do not know how to use private transit systems.

Recommendation: Private industry and Project ACTION should train consumers to use private transportation systems; e.g., schedule appropriate vehicles, etc.

Problem: There is an inadequate return on investment when fares are capped by the ADA. Capital and operating costs are legitimately higher on some vehicles.

Recommendation: Establish a capital assistance or financial incentive program to encourage operators to operate ADA-accessible service.

Problem: Need standards for mobility devices.

Recommendation: Collaborative efforts among mobility device manufacturers, suppliers of service and purchasers of mobility devices could assist in moving towards a mobility device that is safer and more transportable.

Problem: Some operators and passengers do not accept service animals.

Recommendation: Transit authorities should conduct awareness training about service animals, e.g., explain that they are required by legislation to transport service animals and that service animals are trained and do not create problems.

Problem: Private-sector employees need better understanding of the ADA and sensitivity training.

Recommendation: Provide training for drivers and management; ongoing training is needed to address the issue of paratransit driver turnover.

Problem: Does the fact that a driver is an employee or an independent contractor have any signifi-

cant impact on service delivery?

Recommendation: This issue should be researched; Project ACTION, company management and, in some instances, city regulators should develop a disability awareness module to be included in mandatory training programs.

Problem: Assistive systems and devices need to be properly maintained.

Recommendation: Purchase maintenance services from the equipment manufacturer or have them train personnel to properly maintain equipment; preventive maintenance programs should be implemented to routinely inspect all equipment.

Compliance

Problem: FTA has not issued a denial for some undue financial burden waivers that have been filed.

Recommendation: Communications need to be improved between the grantee and the FTA, between the grantee and the regional FTA offices, within the FTA, and between the disability community and the FTA.

Problem: Many local entities do not have a complaint process for consumers.

Recommendation: Transit authorities should inform the community of the procedures for its complaint process; consumers should take advantage of the local complaint process.

Problem: People with disabilities are not adequately travel-trained.

Recommendation: Transit agencies should train people to use fixed route service.

Problem: The FTA enforcement process is unclear. What can we do to help before the issue comes

to the complaint stage?

Recommendation: Consumers should work with local officials, contact their regional FTA representatives and confer with the Office of Civil Rights at FTA.

Problem: Client dumping, shifting and shedding by social service agencies will increase significantly by 1997.

Recommendation: Need stronger structural solution to this issue — possibly regulations and involvement at the federal level.

Problem: Transit properties are having problems with operating and service issues — no-shows, unusual service animals and passenger behavior.

Recommendation: FTA's circular on ADA issues should be widely distributed. The FTA bulletin board should be available to consumers as well as transit providers.

Calendar

Dec. 16, 1994 — The National Council on the Aging invites you to attend a Special Interest Forum on "Aging in Place: Home and Technology Access." This forum will feature presentations by industry experts on accessibility needs, design strategies, new technologies and research, code implications; and case studies. For details, contact Shari Bush, executive director, Association for Safe and Accessible Products, 1511 K Street, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005 or (202) 347-8200.

March 11-14, 1995 — The American Society on Aging (ASA) will hold its 41st Annual Meeting and Exhibition in Atlanta. ASA is the country's largest association of professionals in the field of aging. For more information, call Marcia Freedman, (415) 974-9615.

Proposed Recommendations/Action Steps for DOT, FTA and Project ACTION

The following proposed recommendations and action steps were generated as a result of discussions from both small-group and plenary sessions at the Project ACTION conference:

Recommendations for the Department of Transportation Paratransit Issues

- Reduce reservation requirement from 14 days in advance to three or seven days in advance.
- New legislation that supports a broader type of paratransit services and policy which focuses more on mobility.
- DOT rulemaking to allow suspension of service for excessive cancellations.
- Because paratransit fares are twice the amount of the base fare, creating excessiveness, DOT should reconsider the fare criteria in the regulations.
- The regulations provide conflicting guidance on visitor rights; therefore review, revision and clarification are needed on visitor rights.
- Because the regulation that allows a one-hour scheduling window is confusing as written, there should be clearer and more implementable language added.

Other Issues

- Investigate adding questions to

Conference Notes

Call now and order your audio or video tapes of Project ACTION's 1994 national policy conference:

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(703) 385-3740

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3927 Old Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22030
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the Census to obtain more definitive information about people with disabilities.

- Universal design should be mandated for fixed route vehicles.
- Define ADA-related terms such as service animal, level of driver assistance, common wheelchair, and personal care attendant.

Recommendations for the Federal Transit Administration

- FTA's circular regarding ADA issues should be widely distributed to the transit industry and consumers.
- The FTA bulletin board should be available to consumers as well as transit properties.
- FTA should disseminate information about the nature and number of compliance complaints and the status of the complaints by providing a statistical breakdown by nature and sources on a regular basis.
- Rail operators need clear direction for creating accessible facilities and services which address the diverse needs of transit passengers. FTA could collect and disseminate the data industry-wide.
- FTA should consider the separate issues involved in the provision of detectable warnings at level stations; e.g., light rail vehicle operation(s) in pedestrian malls. This issue should not be left to the Access Board to rule in general terms about detectable warnings and hazardous vehicular ways; it is a separate issue.
- To address the private sector's concern regarding the cost of operating ADA accessible service, implement a capital assistance or financial incentive program to encourage private operators to purchase accessible vehicles.

Recommendations for Project ACTION

- To address the issue of

displacement and/or reduction in level of service for senior citizens; develop and demonstrate local cooperative efforts and disseminate information about local models that promote cooperative efforts.

- There is a lack of information and guidance on the feasibility of implementing trip-by-trip determination. Project ACTION could sponsor research and disseminate the results on cost-effective, realistic approaches to this issue.
- Rail operators need clear direction for creating accessible facilities and services which address the diverse needs of transit passengers. Project ACTION could collect and disseminate the data and distribute it industry-wide.
- The relevance of signs and symbols for conveying information should be investigated. Therefore, rail operators recommend that a comprehensive review of existing audio technologies for conveying accessible information be conducted. Project ACTION should use this document to secure research funds for this recommendation.
- Products are being marketed as ADA-accessible by manufacturers who are not required to meet ADA-accessible equipment standards. Project ACTION should set up a committee to study and develop a certification procedure to ensure that the equipment meets ADA standards.
- Passengers are not familiar with the vehicles and do not know how to use private transit systems. Project ACTION and private industry should train consumers to use private transportation systems; for example, scheduling the appropriate vehicle (ambulatory vs. lift-equipped).
- Project ACTION, company management and city regulators should develop a disability awareness module to include in mandatory training programs.

NTI Offers Paratransit Course

The National Transit Institute (NTI), in consultation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is offering a course entitled, "ADA Complementary Paratransit Planning and Operations: Plan Updates." Federal regulations specifying the Americans with Disabilities Act paratransit planning and implementation processes are very detailed and need to be well-understood by public transit providers. Failure to submit a plan update or requested information for FTA review could jeopardize grantees' continued eligibility for federal financial assistance. Transit operators need to understand various service options available since their services must reach full implementation of the ADA by Jan. 26, 1997.

The objective of this course is to improve the level of understanding of, and adherence to, federal regulations dealing with ADA paratransit planning and implementation requirements. Another objective is to improve general understanding of ADA regulations for complementary paratransit service, especially the impact of regulations requiring annual paratransit plan updates to achieve full implementation by Jan. 26, 1997. A final, and for some, perhaps the most important objective, is to provide an opportunity for transit operators to share and discuss ADA paratransit-related experiences, successes and operational problems. This course has been structured to emphasize this exchange so operators can return to their systems with best practices, creative ideas, solutions, and insight into their ADA transit operations.

The course will combine presentations with group exercises and case studies. Topics will include:

- ADA-based transportation policy and planning initiatives;
- Implications of ADA for fixed

route and paratransit service;

- ADA planning and operating elements and service options;
- Public outreach efforts and ongoing public participation mechanisms;
- Cooperation and coordination in the delivery of services; and
- Required ADA service, vehicle demand and budget estimate tables included in FTA's Plan Update Letter.

The workshop will be taught by KETRON Division, Bionetics Corporation professionals. Lead facilitators will be John Morrison and Anne Schwarz. The workshop will be managed by John Balog. Dates and locations are as follows:

Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1994

Hyatt Regency Tampa at Tampa City Center — Tampa, Fla.

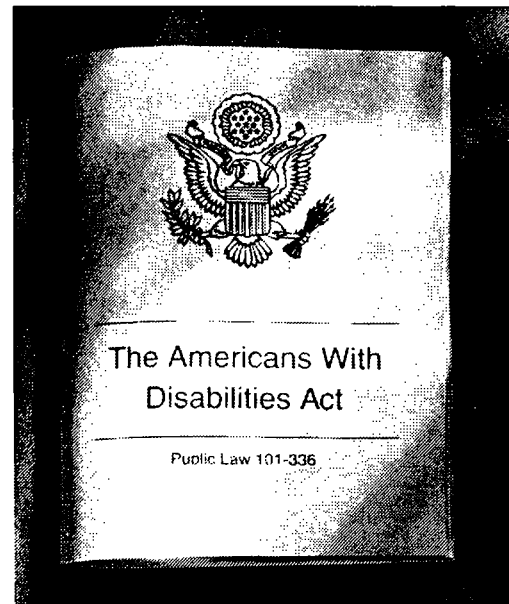
Dec. 7-8, 1994

Dunfey San Mateo Hotel — San Mateo, Calif.

The course is designed for staff of transit agencies who are specifically responsible for developing and implementing ADA complementary paratransit plans and for staff engaged in planning, operations, finance, and administration and are directly involved with the complementary paratransit requirements of the ADA regulations. There is no registration fee.

NTI is also interested in your feedback regarding future ADA offerings. Should additional ADA eligibility courses be offered? Is there a need for a course in ADA public participation? NTI would like to hear from you! Contact Eleanor Edwards at the National Transit Institute, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 120 Albany St., Suite 705, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; phone (908) 932-1700.

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By supporting Easter Seals and this Act, you are giving millions of Americans their long awaited, and much deserved, ticket to ride. Thank you.



Infrared Remote Signage

Bill Crandall, Ph.D.
Smith Kettlewell Rehabilitation
Engineering Research Center
San Francisco, Calif.

Effective mobility depends upon proper orientation; for mainstream society, this is accomplished by printed signs. People who are print-disabled, are blind, or have other visual impairments will benefit from a new technology called Talking Signs.

Under funding from Project ACTION, the Smith-Kettlewell

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center in San Francisco is in the process of evaluating the use of Talking Signs for enhancing accessibility to public transit.

The demonstration and evaluation program involves the installation of 93 remote infrared signs in one of San Francisco's underground Bay Area Transit District (BART)/Municipal Railway (Muni) stations.

These "signs" allow people with visual disabilities to directly know not only what, but where.

Just as sighted persons visually scan the environment to acquire both label and direction information, remote signs directly orient users to the labeled goal and constantly update users on their progress toward that goal. That is, unlike Braille, raised letters or voice signs which passively label some location or give mobility instructions to some goal, the remote signage provides a repeating, directionally selective voice message which originates at the "sign" and is transmitted at some distance to a hand-held receiver.

The project is allowing both transit officials and riders an opportunity to directly determine how effective the system is in the complex, three-level station.

The project also allows the researchers at Smith-Kettlewell to determine the level of exposure to the system that users require in order to use the technology effectively.

Talking Signs were developed by Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute, Love Electronics, Inc., and Talking Signs, Inc.

BART is a regional heavy-rail commuter line, and Muni provides light-rail, bus and cable car service throughout San Francisco.



Infrared signs enable people with vision impairments to use public transportation.

Photo by Gretchen Hildner.

NLAT Goes On-Line

Consumers and organizations may use their computers to access the bulletin board system of the National Institute for Accessible Transportation (NIAT). Information developed through Project ACTION's local demonstration efforts is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (202) 637-9607.

In addition, Project ACTION is on America Online with an address of projection@aol.com.

CTAP Focuses on Transportation Issues

All too often, the people for whom health and human services programs were created are unable to get to those services because they have no transportation. The same health, economic or geographic conditions that necessitate program assistance often leave people isolated.

Community transportation is the vital link between these transit-dependent individuals and the services they need. The network of community transit providers stretches across every state, creating a mosaic of people-oriented agencies operating a patchwork of vehicles on often limited funding.

To help human services programs to better serve their clients and understand transportation issues, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services created the Community Transportation Assistance Project (CTAP).

Now entering its fifth year in partnership with Community Transportation Association of America, Project ACTION and the National Easter Seal Society, CTAP offers help. Many human services programs are in the business of transportation and don't even know it. They are simply trying to provide access to their program's primary mission, which may be health care; jobs and job training; services to elderly people; nutrition

programs; youth services; social services; and more.

But whether they offer access to their programs directly or through contractual arrangements, these agencies are, by default, transportation providers.

Through its user-friendly staff, toll-free hotline, transit

resource center, bulletin board service, and certified peer network, CTAP offers one-stop, full-service assistance for human services programs and community transit providers, including:

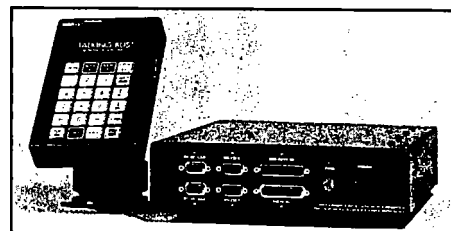
- Transit Hotline. The toll-free Transit Hotline is the direct line
- (Please turn to page 16)

State-of-the-Art Talking Bus

Earlier this year, Digital Recorders, Inc., introduced its new DR500C Talking Bus at the American Public Transit Association's Bus Operations and Technology Conference in Richmond, Va. The DR500C is the latest in a line of Talking Bus systems which Digital Recorders has been producing for the public transit industry since 1988.

The Talking Bus enables public transit agencies to comply with ADA requirements for stop announcements and other information for passengers with visual impairments on fixed route transit vehicles.

The DR500C provides a foundation for incorporating emerging "Smart Bus" technology. New features included CD-quality audio using PCMCIA cards, automatic volume control, dual channel audio, and a multifunction universal keypad. The DR500C also employs an open architecture



The DR500C Talking Bus

system which allows future software integration with other onboard "Smart Bus" systems.

The state-of-the-art open architecture product was conceived by Robin Burk, vice president of engineering and operations. "An excellent team utilizing sophisticated concurrent engineering techniques made this possible," acknowledged Burk. As is the case in the telecommunications and computer industries, the transit industry will require powerful open architecture products like the DR500C Talking Bus as it moves towards the Intelligent Vehicle/Highway System.

Share in the Good News About Project ACTION!

☐ Yes, I would like to receive the *Project ACTION Update*. ☐ Please send me a request for proposals.

If you, a friend or an associate needs the latest information on accessible transportation for people with disabilities, we will be pleased to send the *Project ACTION Update*.

Simply complete this form and return to:

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Project ACTION Update, 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 613, Washington, DC 20005

CTAP

(Continued from page 15)

to all the services and resources provided by CTAP. Call (800) 527-8279 (voice or TDD) Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

- **Transit Resource Center.** The National Transit Resource Center is CTAP's information clearinghouse. Its library includes more than 15,000 publications, training materials, legislative updates, and other up-to-date resources on a wide range of human services and community transportation topics. The information specialists who staff the Resource Center are well-versed in all aspects of transportation, including the latest federal regulations and pending legislation. To access the Resource Center, call the Transit Hotline.

- **Bulletin Board Service.** Total transit information is just a keystroke away with TAP-IN, CTAP's bulletin board service. With a computer, modem and telephone number, anyone can instantly access and download the

Resource Center's numerous databases, regulatory updates, a national calendar of events, and more. All of this information is updated regularly.

In addition, TAP-IN offers users the opportunity to post messages and interact with colleagues around the country on a variety of access issues. To access TAP-IN, call (202) 628-2537. Users pay only the cost of the phone call for this 24-hour, seven-day-a-week resource.

- **Publications.** CTAP produces a range of publications and articles on new and emerging issues, including accessible transportation that is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, cutting-edge accessibility technologies, and coordination models and methods that work. For information about publications that deal with these and other human services transportation issues, call the Transit Hotline.

- **Technical Assistance Peer Network.** The CTAP-certified peer network, TAP-Net, offers technical assistance through a nationwide pool of human services transportation experts.

Coordination of transportation resources, accessibility under the ADA, automated dispatching and record-keeping, client mobility training, and passenger assistance are available through telephone calls, conference workshops and site visits.

- **Training.** CTAP has produced two step-by-step training modules designed to guide human services programs and transit providers in implementing efficient and cost-effective client access. Using case studies and worksheets, *Coordinating Community Transportation Services* and *Making Community Transportation Accessible* each contain a planning and implementation handbook as well as a facilitator guide.

- **Other Services.** CTAP also conducts regional training conferences and federal and state briefings focusing on improving client access to services through coordinated, accessible transportation.

For more information, call the toll-free Transit Hotline at (800) 527-8279. Remember, help is just a telephone call away!

Project ACTION

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TESTIMONY

Statement of the

NATIONAL EASTER SEAL SOCIETY

on the

Status of and Fiscal Year 1996 Appropriation for

Project ACTION

Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation

submitted to

Subcommittee on Transportation
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

Witnesses:

Christopher Tiernan
Senior Government Relations Specialist
National Easter Seal Society

Rosalyn Simon, Ph.D
Executive Director
Project ACTION

March 21, 1995

EASTER SEAL RECOMMENDATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996 APPROPRIATIONS

The National Easter Seal Society appreciates the opportunity to share its views with the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation concerning funding for Project ACTION -- Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation. For the nation's 25 million people with disabilities who depend on public transportation, the availability of accessible transportation is the critical factor that decides whether they can pursue opportunities in employment, education, housing, and recreation. Congress created Project ACTION in 1987 to promote transportation accessibility and to enhance cooperation between transit providers and the disability community. In creating Project ACTION, Congress expressed five priorities:

- (1) identify people with disabilities and their transit needs;
- (2) develop outreach and marketing efforts;
- (3) develop training programs for transit personnel;
- (4) develop training programs for transit users with disabilities; and,
- (5) apply technology to eliminate barriers to transportation and accessibility.

In fulfilling this Congressional mission, Project ACTION has become the nation's foremost resource for transit providers who are attempting to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The National Easter Seal Society administers Project ACTION, in a close working relationship with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Jointly Project ACTION and FTA determine priorities, conduct research, and plan and participate in the dissemination of materials. In enacting the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Congress recognized Project ACTION's important contributions by authorizing funding from the FTA national programs research budget for Project ACTION activities, and strongly endorsing the efforts of Project ACTION in the legislative history.

Congress made a major contribution to the lives of people with disabilities by enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since the passage of the ADA, demand for Project ACTION assistance has grown substantially. Project ACTION has engaged in ground breaking research, demonstration projects and technical assistance to improve access to public transportation for people with disabilities. The Project has developed an impressive resource center of informational materials for a wide variety of transit and disability community audiences on the nature and progress of ADA implementation, initiated consumer campaigns to insure that people with disabilities are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the ADA, provided information and technical assistance to transportation providers and disability organizations, and in June of 1994 conducted the First National Policy Conference on ADA Implementation in Transportation. Since its inception, Project ACTION has funded 77 research and demonstration projects to improve transportation accessibility. Here is just a small sample of Project ACTION programs past and present:

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Washington, D.C. -- Washington Metro carried out a model travel training assistance program in cooperation with human service agencies and disability organizations to the train of approximately 200 people with a variety of

disabilities. The training program now serves as a model for training consumers with disabilities to use the bus and rail services in a large transit system.

KRW, Incorporated, Alexandria, Virginia -- KRW trained an important segment of the transportation industry using ADA transportation accessibility course materials previously prepared by KRW with funding from the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance (Access) Board. A nationwide training program was launched in ten strategic locations around the country.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-- Designed and constructed access ramps to provide access to commuter rail transportation and produced a videotape to furnish transit operators with sensitivity training on the needs of people with disabilities.

Lifespan Associates, Akron, Ohio -- Lifespan Associates worked closely with the public transit authorities, human service agencies and the disability communities to study the transportation needs of people with disabilities in counties in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Results have been used to evaluate current transportation services and recommend improvements, including providing better coordination of services in urban and rural settings.

The ARC, Arlington, Texas -- The ARC developed a new approach to the training of transit personnel to reflect the needs of people with cognitive disabilities. While ARC's project also addressed persons with a variety of disabilities, the emphasis on persons with cognitive impairments made an important contribution in rounding out many existing transit personnel training programs.

Focus on Community Understanding and Services, Inc., Columbus, Ohio -- FOCUS received national recognition for excellence in promoting cooperation between the transit and disability communities. FOCUS launched an expanded program of outreach, community identification, and training of people with disabilities on the use of accessible public transportation services.

Community Transit, York, Pennsylvania. -- Community Transit designed and tested a personal computer-based program of interactive instruction for both transit personnel and consumers with disabilities. The interactive program uses state-of-the-art technology to integrate sound, live video, animation, computer graphics, and interactive exercises in a cohesive and consistent program.

ECRI, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania -- ECRI conducted research on how best to position and secure riders and their mobility aids in transit vehicles, particularly paratransit vehicles.

Earlier this month, Project ACTION officially announced the funding of 17 new local demonstration projects designed to address the most critical current issues facing transit providers working to comply with the ADA. The following summaries are some examples of these new projects:

Blair Senior Services, Inc., Altoona, Pennsylvania -- Blair Senior Services, Inc., will develop a coordinating project, focusing on rural areas/transportation needs of senior citizens, to increase communication between public and private transportation providers; reduce physical and attitudinal barriers toward persons with disabilities; and identify transportation service needs of persons with disabilities. The project will produce a handbook entitled, *How to Develop a Specialized Transportation Enhancement Program*.

Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon -- Oregon State University (OSU), as a Project ACTION contractor in 1991-1992, developed an innovative system for securement of wheeled mobility aids on mass transit vehicles. The system allows a mobility aid user to secure the aid in a matter of seconds with no operator assistance. This project will examine user acceptance, installation and maintenance requirements, and operator training requirements. A key component of this project is demonstrating that mobility aids can be equipped with the required interface using local resources and at a reasonable cost.

American Public Transit Association, Washington, DC -- The American Public Transit Association (APTA) will develop and implement an innovative method of dissemination and replication of Project ACTION programs. The primary project goal is to expand the informational and knowledge base of transit providers about ADA issues.

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Berkeley, California -- The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) will conduct an ADA Paratransit Compliance Study to develop an accurate, readily available picture of paratransit compliance which represents a cross-section of systems nationwide and to determine what factors correlate with successful ADA compliance.

SunLine Transit Agency, Thousand Palms, California -- SunLine Transit Agency will develop a program designed to provide new opportunities for consumers to actively participate in the planning and development of transit services. To develop a consistent effective method for ongoing consumer input to transit services, staff will identify successful transit advisory committees; analyze the reasons for their success; recommend a model mission statement, goals and desired composition; develop an advisory committee training manual; and test the project on the SunLine Transit Agency in Southern California.

University of South Florida, Center for Urban Transportation Research, Tampa, Florida - The University of South Florida, Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) will conduct a comprehensive research program working with transit systems, paratransit providers, vehicle operators, service animal users, service animal training schools, and paratransit training professionals to develop "best-practice" policies and procedures for transporting and assisting passengers with service animals.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Project ACTION, significant progress has been made in promoting transportation accessibility since the passage of the ADA in 1990. Nationwide bus fleet accessibility has grown. Rail station access has increased. Paratransit

services have improved and expanded. And the disability and transit communities have learned how to work together to promote accessible transportation. Perhaps the best example of this cooperation was demonstrated at the June 1994 Project ACTION-sponsored National Policy Conference on ADA Implementation in Transportation. The conference presented the results of local demonstration projects and current research initiatives in accessible transportation, brought together key decision makers concerned with transit accessibility to discuss current and emerging policy issues in ADA implementation in transportation, and helped to develop solutions and recommendations to ease ADA implementation and improve access to transportation for people with disabilities.

In the past, there was little cooperation between people with disabilities and the transit community. Project ACTION's educational focus and success at bringing people to the table to resolve disputes has avoided costly legal battles that could undermine public support for the ADA. Project ACTION continues to play a vital role in encouraging parties to mediate before they litigate. Project ACTION's continuing efforts can ensure that we focus our limited energies and financial resources on advancing the best interests of people with disabilities and not on costly litigation.

Progress achieved through Project ACTION has been mutually beneficial for transit providers and the disability community. However, as transit providers approach the fifth year of ADA implementation, serious concerns have emerged. Chief among these are the difficulties ensuring ADA compliance in light of costs. Paratransit costs are expensive and resources are limited. Operating costs increase as federal operating assistance faces possible cutbacks. Fixed route ridership by people with disabilities is still low, while paratransit demand escalates. Determining ADA paratransit eligibility is complex and politically sensitive.

This subcommittee is well aware that skyrocketing paratransit costs are a major financial concern for the transit industry and for taxpayers. The annual cost of providing paratransit services for persons traveling to and from work each day can run from five to 10 thousand dollars per person. Project ACTION is training and encouraging school age youngsters, high school graduates, and older Americans to use accessible fixed-route services; with particular attention given to those who are transitioning off paratransit. Project ACTION-sponsored programs designed to help people with disabilities transfer from paratransit to fixed route services have been tremendously effective. In Baltimore, Project ACTION's success at transitioning passengers to fixed routes has saved transit operators five times the cost of our grant in one year alone. In New York, Project ACTION trained 68 students with disabilities to use fixed route transportation. This represents annual saving in paratransit costs of \$538,000. Other systems in Austin, Texas and Sarasota, Florida have had similar successes. Overall, Project ACTION-sponsored programs have trained 436 people with disabilities to use fixed route systems and can demonstrate savings of nearly \$3.6 million dollars annually. In many cases, initial consumer training successes achieved with Project ACTION funds have been so cost effective that transit systems have provided non-federal dollars to continue the programs. Project ACTION has made, and will continue to make, a difference here and in related areas providing this subcommittee with an excellent return on its investment. Transitioning riders to fixed-route systems remains a high priority for Project ACTION.

Project ACTION's main focus in fiscal year 1996 will be to find and implement creative and cost-effective methods to promote ADA compliance and to reduce the rising costs of paratransit. In the coming year, Project ACTION will continue to provide answers to the questions that transit systems throughout the nation face as they work toward ADA compliance, including launching major initiatives to help transit systems make paratransit eligibility determinations.

In order to carry out the program of continuity and innovation outlined above, the National Easter Seal Society respectfully requests the subcommittee to support a level of funding for Project ACTION of \$2.0 million in fiscal year 1996. Project ACTION has developed workable solutions to many of the most critical issues transit communities around the nation face as they work to implement the ADA. A funding level of \$2.0 million will help ensure that Project ACTION is able to share this valuable information with transit systems nationwide. We understand the fiscal constraints under which the subcommittee must operate, however, Project ACTION is a credible, cost-effective and creative means of engaging disability and transit interests to improve access to transportation for people with disabilities.

Project ACTION would not be possible without the leadership of the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee chairs, members and staff. We are deeply grateful for this and look forward to continued collaboration.

Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation)

In 1988, Congress earmarked \$3 million for a national research and demonstration project to identify and promote "Innovations in Public Transportation for People with Disabilities." The National Easter Seal Society received the funding through the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration to initiate local demonstration projects nationwide to eliminate barriers to transportation and accessibility.

The original Congressionally-mandated priority areas for funding local demonstration projects were:

- identifying people with disabilities in the community and their transportation needs;
- develop outreach and marketing strategies;
- develop training programs for transit providers;
- apply technology to eliminate barriers to transportation accessibility.

Following the passage of the ADA in 1990, Project ACTION's goals were expanded to assist transit operators in implementing the law's transportation provisions. Funding categories were similarly expanded to include assisting private transportation providers and developing ADA high impact initiatives to facilitate compliance with ADA's statutory and regulatory requirements. In 1991, Congress endorsed the efforts of Project ACTION by authorizing funding through 1997 in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act.

Since its inception, Project ACTION has engaged in ground breaking research, demonstration activities, and technical assistance to improve transit accessibility and assist the implementation of ADA. Since 1991, Project ACTION has funded a total of sixty local demonstration projects at a total cost of \$4.5 million; individual project budgets ranged from \$25,000 to \$250,000. Designed to improve transit accessibility, all projects embraced the theme of promoting cooperation between the disability community and the transit industry. Through creative models of programs that recognize that technical solutions for expanding accessibility may not be enough, Project ACTION local demonstration projects address ADA implementation concerns by blending the perspectives of local consumers with disabilities with those of the transit system. As a result, local demonstration projects are developing innovative, effective, sustainable solutions to the most critical implementation problems.

Project ACTION is not only at the forefront of launching innovative approaches to accessible transportation but has a solid and consistent record in research, policy development, and the advocacy of persons with disabilities and their rights to access public transportation.

In June 1994, Project ACTION in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration presented its first national policy conference, "Transit Accessibility: Implementing the ADA," in Washington, D.C. The conference focused on three primary areas: bringing together policy makers to discuss current and emerging policy issues surrounding ADA implementation; developing solutions/recommendations to facilitate ADA implementation; and presenting results of local demonstration projects and current research initiatives. More than 300 participants -- from 32 states, Puerto Rico and Australia -- representing the local/state/federal government, transit industry, and disability community attended.

Project ACTION has assembled a library of information and materials addressing accessible transportation for people with disabilities. To ensure that the knowledge created and information generated reaches transit providers and persons with disabilities, Project ACTION established the National Institute for Accessible Transportation (NIAT). Under The Institute, Project ACTION has available Project ACTION Update, final reports, technical manuals, surveys, training curricula, videotapes, etc. In addition, a national consumer awareness campaign focusing on training persons with disabilities to use accessible fixed route transportation is underway. The first of numerous collaborative efforts begins with a pilot training program with the Oakland MaComb Independent Living Center and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Region Transportation, Detroit, Michigan.

With the issuance of its fourth local demonstration program solicitation on June 30, 1994, Project ACTION continues to propel the wheel of progress towards accessible transportation nationwide for persons with disabilities. Project ACTION will continue to build on its relationship with the transit and disability communities to provide a comprehensive program of information dissemination, technical assistance, and training activities.

For more information, contact Project ACTION/NIAT, 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 613, Washington, D.C., 20005; (202) 347-3066, 1-800-659-NIAT (Voice/TTY), (202) 637-9607 (EBB), projaction@aol.com (E-Mail Address).