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Revision Process Begins for ANSI A117.1

Committee Addresses Housing and Coordination

Updating the technical standard that is the foundation of accessibility in the US is underway and the committee charged with the job is ready to address the latest issues - especially those related to housing and coordination with other requirements. When completed, the 2008 version of the ANSI A117.1 Standard on Accessible and Useable Buildings and Facilities is expected to reflect the most current knowledge concerning accessible design.

The process, which should take about two years, will update the 2003 version of the A117.1 Standard. The focus of the revision cycle for the current version included efforts to make it consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), the federal accessibility requirements.

ANSI A117 Committee Chair Ken Schoonover anticipates that the process will be much like the last cycle, but with a lighter workload. "Procedurally it will be the same," he says. "The number of proposals will be fewer than the previous cycle because less harmonization is

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Ample natural and artificial lighting sources combine to provide a comfortable environment for all in the CNIB cafeteria. The color-contrasted and tactile flooring strip is attractive and provides a unique wayfinding cue for users with visual impairments.

Case Study: Universal Design at Canadian National Institute for the Blind Headquarters

by Shane Holten, MES

Canada's primary provider of vision loss support services embraced a universal design approach when designing and building its new Toronto headquarters. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), a voluntary agency established in 1918, assists people who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind in leading independent and active lives.

Replacing the original facility built in 1956, this new headquarters, which opened in the summer of 2005, was designed by Mary Jane Finlayson of Architects in Joint Venture - Shore Tilbe Irwin & Partners and Sterling Finlayson Architects. The headquarters occupies approximately 140,000 square feet and it is promoted by the CNIB as a "model of universal design" and a "landmark" in the City of Toronto. According to architect Mary Jane Finlayson, "The goal was to make a unique building that was not extravagant, but exceptional; one that worked on many levels so

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An Opportunity for a Frank Discussion of the ADA

The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) is organizing what are being called Stakeholder Dialogues that are intended to encourage a variety of groups to discuss ways to better implement and enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The dialogues, organized under contract from the National Council on Disability, offer one of the first federal government-sanctioned opportunities for frank discussions that are likely to affect policy. The effort has been described as an opportunity to speak openly about the reality of accessibility in the US.

However, thus far the opportunity seems to have been lost on business. Representatives of the business community stayed away in droves from sessions held Feb 22-23 in San Francisco.

Although a revered name in the disability community, DREDF's past work as the nation's leading disability advocacy organization and plaintiff in many important national accessibility lawsuits has likely resulted in some corporate attorneys concluding that their participation would only bring trouble.

Yet we have got to start somewhere. If we don't talk, how can we resolve the problems? Most businesses don't have a plan to stop drive-by lawsuits. They are frustrated that the law allows minor details to be the basis of settlements that make no meaningful improvement to accessibility and pad the pockets of plaintiff's attorneys and experts. And people with disabilities are frustrated that they continue to experience barriers -- 15 years after passage of the ADA. The question to be answered is how can we achieve access without so much confusion and frustration?

I have some suggestions to make at the next dialogue -- do you?

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Paul Grayson Dies

Paul John Grayson, an internationally respected universal design champion, died March 12. President of Environments for Living, Grayson was an advisor on strategic planning, universal design, and accessible environments.

"I cannot count all the times and all the ways he contributed to the universal design movement, and to me personally," says Elaine Ostroff, founding director of the Adaptive Environments Center and contributing editor to *Universal Design Newsletter*. "The combination of his generous personality, his experience as a practicing architect and his deep knowledge about aging and design was unique." More on Grayson in the July issue of *UDN*.

ADA Stakeholder Dialogues

The National Council on Disability (NCD) is convening a group of businesses, government representatives, architects, and others from the disability community in a series of one and one-half day Stakeholder Dialogues that are part of a nationwide effort to identify methods to improve implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The purposes of the dialogues are to: develop recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the ADA; identify means and incentives for ADA compliance through public-private collaborations; and help craft strategies for improving stakeholder awareness and understanding of ADA requirements. The next Stakeholder Dialogues for large and small business are scheduled to occur in Chicago, May 2 & 5. For more information, contact: Susan Henderson at shenderson@dredf.org or visit: www.dredf.org.



Hospital Accessibility Agreement Signed

The largest private hospital in Washington, DC has agreed to improve access to its medical services for patients with disabilities. Made public in November, the settlement agreement between the Equal Rights Center and the Washington Hospital Center (WHC), is one of the first of its kind to address accessibility in hospitals, according to the Equal Rights Center of the Washington Lawyers’ Committee. Under the agreement, the WHC will renovate at least 35 patient rooms to make them accessible to people with disabilities. Rooms will include accessible toilet facilities and adjustable height beds. When not operating at full capacity, the WHC will hold open the accessible rooms for patients with disabilities. In addition, the WHC has agreed to remove barriers throughout the hospital, procure accessible exam tables for every department that uses exam tables, survey all equipment and purchase accessible equipment where needed, review and revise policies, implement special procedures for patients with spinal cord injuries and provide training to its staff to ensure implementation and use of the new policies and equipment.

California Develops a “Certified Access Specialist” Program

The California Division of the State Architect has developed a “Certified Access Specialist” program in response to the requirements of State Senate Bill 262. The program creates two licensed categories:

Access Investigator (a non-licensed architect). Conducts facility surveys to assess compliance with accessibility codes and standards; prepares accessibility reports concerning removal of barriers at public accommodations; reviews construction documents to evaluate the compliance of proposed work with accessibility codes and standards; and verifies the compliance of recently completed construction with accessibility codes and standards

Access Architect (licensed architect). Directs the design and drafting of accessible features in construction documents; resolves design issues that are not clearly prescribed in accessibility codes and standards; and advocates policies

which satisfy the legal obligation to provide nondiscriminatory opportunities to participate and enjoy the benefits offered by a public facility.

In a state with a considerable amount of entrepreneurial ADA litigation and a bevy of self-proclaimed “experts,” the programs may provide some clarity and exposure to the credibility of those involved in this volatile arena, says John Paul Scott, Deputy Director of Physical Access in the San Francisco Mayor’s Office on Disability. The program requires a “Criminal Record History Check.” The direct benefit will be to force many of the “ADA experts” to seek legitimate continuing education in order to pass the certification exams. For more information, visit www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/CertifiedAccess/default.htm

Wide Enough for Wheels Campaign

Montgomery County, MD has launched a voluntary campaign to encourage homeowners and business owners when shoveling snow from public sidewalks to shovel a 36-inch path, rather than simply the width of a shovel. County law requires businesses and homeowners to shovel public sidewalks and curb ramps in front of their properties within 24 hours of a snowfall. The wider width accommodates people who use walkers, wheelchairs, baby strollers and rolling brief cases. According to the Wide Enough for Wheels campaign literature, “Not everyone can use a narrow path.... A little extra effort makes it possible for everyone to use the public sidewalk and curb ramps in front of your home or business.” For more information, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

North Carolina Accessibility Code Receives ADA Certification

The North Carolina Accessibility Code (NCAC) has been certified as meeting or exceeding the accessible design requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Department of Justice (DOJ) certification simplifies the process of complying with the ADA. In a state with an ADA-certified code, businesses that conform to the state’s code process during construction or alteration of a facility will have



In addition, the WHC has agreed to remove barriers throughout the hospital, procure accessible exam tables for every department that uses exam tables, survey all equipment and purchase accessible equipment where needed....

Universal Design Leader Ostroff Honored by AIA

International universal design leader and design advocate Elaine Ostroff will be awarded an Honorary Membership by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in June. The Honorary Membership is one of the highest honors the AIA can bestow on a person outside the profession of architecture. It is given to “a person of esteemed character who is not eligible for membership in the Institute but who has rendered distinguished service to the profession of architecture or to the arts and sciences allied therewith.” The award presentation will take place at the AIA 2006 National Convention and Design Expo on June 8-10, in Los Angeles.

Ostroff has had a significant impact on both design practice and design education for more than 30 years. Highly regarded for her expertise on issues of accessible and universal design, for involving user-experts in the design process and for her collaborative style, Ostroff remains one of the world’s leading advocates and authorities on innovative design solutions that enhance the experiences of people of all ages and abilities.

“Elaine Ostroff’s belief in the power of architecture to enhance and support human dignity and every individual’s competence has provided extraordinary benefits to architects and other designers worldwide,” noted Boston Society of Architects president, Jane Weinzapfel, FAIA.

Ostroff’s pioneering work at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health in the early 1970s focused on how the physical environment was a major barrier to learning and normal development, and led to the creation of the

executive director of Adaptive Environments for 20 years, Ostroff was a tireless global advocate and educator who helped architects, industrial designers, educators, students, government officials and others understand the importance and effectiveness of universal design as a vehicle for social justice.

In response to the announcement, Ostroff replied, “Architects play such a vital role in making a more livable and equitable society. I am deeply moved by this honor. I wish I could share it with the many team members – Adaptive Environments staff, consultants, board members and advisors – who did so much of the work I am being recognized for...”

According to John P. S. Salmen, *Universal Design Newsletter* Publisher and President of Universal Designers & Consultants Inc., Takoma Park, MD, “Besides the wealth of universal design insight, Elaine has taught me -- in word and act -- the effect that one person can have on improving the lives of so many. She has done so through unwavering commitment and, more importantly, cooperation.”

Long before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was written, Ostroff led the work in Massachusetts with the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) and state agencies to produce the award-winning illustrated guidelines and educational programs that explained the “why” behind accessibility requirements. Many of the ADA publications still used nationally today by the Department of Justice and the Department of Education were developed under her direction.

In 1986, in cooperation with the BSA, Ostroff and other Adaptive Environments staff initiated Best of Accessible Boston – the first design awards program that addressed the aesthetics as well as the technical details of accessible design. Ostroff’s unique approach to educating people about universal design through the user experi-



Elaine Ostroff

“I am deeply moved by this honor. I wish I could share it with the many team members – Adaptive Environments staff, consultants, board members and advisors – who did so much of the work I am being recognized for....”

Elaine Ostroff



Ostroff learned early the importance of team. Ostroff is the third person from the front, on the right in this high school basketball team photo, 1950.

internationally recognized nonprofit organization, Adaptive Environments, in 1978. As ex-

SWEDEN: Design for All

A Swedish effort to have full participation in society got a major boost earlier this year when the Swedish branch of the European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD Sweden) received a grant for a "Design for All" project.

Referred to as a "national pooling of resources," the three-year project has three co-applicants: the Swedish Industrial Design Foundation (SVID), the National Accessibility Centre of the Swedish Disability Ombudsman (HO), and the Swedish Disability Federation (HSO). The SVID is a member of EIDD Sweden. The project, which will receive more than \$600,000 each year for the next three years, is intended to build on the existing networks of the three organizations.

"For some time now, there's been a clear political will to use the Design for All concept in the work on making society more accessible for all, but until now, we've lacked the players with the know-how and resources necessary to turn this political will into action," says Finn Petré, Chairman of the EIDD Sweden board in an article on the EIDD Sweden website. The funding is seen as the government affirming its support for the Design for All concept. It is hoped that when the project is over, the Design for All concept will have pervaded those working in policy, social planning, architecture and product design.

Universal Design Newsletter Contributing Editor Elaine Ostroff was named an honorary member of EIDD two years ago. For more information, visit: www.design-for-all.org.

FRANCE: Free Toilets in Paris

Some universally designed public toilets in Paris became more accessible than ever in February as the process began to convert the self-sanitizing toilets to work for free. Use of the toilet previously cost about 40 euro centimes (50 cents). In all, more than 400 toilets will be converted. One of the objectives of the effort is to reduce public urination.

The toilets were designed by J.C. Decaux in

collaboration with Ron Mace and Barry Atwood. Featured in the National Endowments for the Arts "Search for Excellence in Universal Design" in 1996 (*Universal Design Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2000), the single user toilet facility provides safe, comfortable and usable accommodations for all users in most of the public locations. Its interior space accommodates people who use wheelchairs, walkers, guide dogs and attendants as well as adults using baby carriages or strollers and people who have large packages, luggage or other special needs.

As reported back then, "The knee space for the automatic lavatory, which is beside and behind the toilet, becomes part of the clear floor space for the toilet. The knee space itself and a subtle angle in the corner of the toilet cabinet plus an additional recessed space at the lavatory shelf allows people to position a wheelchair as close as necessary to the toilet and forward or back as far as needed to make side, forward or diagonal transfers from wheelchair to seat. There are automatic systems in the unit that eliminate the need for a user to reach and activate controls. The

toilet automatically flushes after each use; and once the user leaves the unit, the toilet retracts into the cabinet where it is sanitized and dried with warm air and then redeployed. The lavatory has no user-operated controls. Sensors open valves to provide a flow of moderate temperature soapy water when the users put their

hands into the enclosure. It changes to clear rinse water after a few seconds and then to warm air for drying. The lavatory has a special shelf with a wide edge to provide forearm support for people who cannot raise their hands. The Decaux toilets have horizontal grab bars at the toilet and a short, lower bar on the left side of the toilet and two vertical bars placed at locations known to be advantageous to wheelchair users and standing mobility impaired users. **Editor's Note:** This is one of the 38 winning projects detailed on the *Images of Universal Design Excellence* CD, available from the *Universal Design Newsletter* website, www.UniversalDesign.com. 

The toilets were designed by J.C. Decaux in collaboration with Ron Mace and Barry Atwood.



Paris public toilet

"World Update" is compiled by Elaine Ostroff, founding director of the Adaptive Environments Center, and Denise Hofstedt. If you have information about international universal design efforts that you would like to have published in *Universal Design Newsletter*, write to us at: 6 Grant Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912; or contact publisher@universaldesign.com.

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needed. But there is still an opportunity for harmonization.... The differences this time around are on a slightly smaller scope.”

To kick off the revision cycle, the ANSI A117 Committee has formed task groups to tackle three significant issues: accessible housing, coordination of the A117.1 Standard with the new Americans with Disabilities Act/Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADA/ABA-AG) and coordination of the A117.1 with the International Building Code (IBC).

The task groups were created to allow the committee to focus on a particular area, according to Schoonover. For example the Dwelling Units Task Group was formed because of input from the committee. “Various communities have enacted visitability ordinances,” he says. “There would be some benefit to have a consensus on a technical standard” for visitability. He also notes that the Dwelling Unit Task Group will look at issues related to aging-in-place and whether or not criteria within the standard fulfill a needed benefit.

Coordination

The scope of the task group working on coordination with the new ADA/ABA-AG (published in July 2004) is to review the technical requirements in the ANSI Standard and in the new ADA/ABA-AG that overlap or which may address subjects not covered by the Standard.

According to task group chair Marsha Mazz, Technical Assistance Coordinator, US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board), the task group is currently reviewing the Access Board’s revised ADA/ABA-AG and the 2003 edition of the ANSI A117.1 Standard. Members of the task group will determine if they want to recommend changes to the ANSI Standard. All task group-recommended changes will be crafted into proposals with justifications and submitted to the full committee for review. “We cannot stray far from our scope which provides us our marching orders,” says Mazz. “For example, if someone proposes a change to a section in the Standard and that change is unrelated to harmonization, [this] task group cannot entertain that change. However, the A117 process [does] provide for public proposals, one of which might address the issue of concern. The full committee will act on all public proposals.”

The task group that will be examining coordination between the Standard and the IBC will be specifically looking at the provisions that overlap or otherwise address common subjects.

According to the stated purpose of the task group, “A117.1 by design contains only technical criteria and omits any scoping provisions. The IBC, on the other hand, has scoping requirements, but also contains provisions that overlap, duplicate and, in some cases, conflict with A117.1. Some of these, such as stairs, ramps, doors, protruding objects and others, are mainstreamed issues that are appropriately addressed in a building code. Some IBC provisions, such as accessible means of egress, contain technical provisions that are not addressed in A117.1. All relevant text should be evaluated to determine the appropriate coordination between the documents.”

Public Comments

Public comments have begun to arrive, according to the Committee Secretariat Jay Woodward. “We have a number of the changes that I would argue are really intended just to make the document more usable. These would include one that suggests completely reformatting the dwelling unit provisions in Chapter 10. There are others in that group which are not as extensive but look at only coordinating a specific item so that the Accessible, Type A or Type B units are clear as to what is required and what is not.”

Woodward also says that there are a number of proposals that address the use of scooters versus wheelchairs. “Many of the scooters are bigger and bigger and they can not use many of the fixtures which are laid out and intended for use by people who use wheelchairs. Some of these proposals include a larger turning circle, elimination of the ‘T’ shaped turning space, higher clearances below a counter and for toe space,” he says.

Participate!

Public comments and information on how to submit them are posted on the ICC website at www.iccsafe.org. Schoonover encourages any interested party to submit comments or attend the meetings. “It does make a difference. When a difference of opinion occurs, input from others can help to identify the consensus. Public comments can and do influence people on the committee. The more information we get, the better position the committee is in to make a decision,” he says. 

“There would be some benefit to have a consensus on a technical standard” for visitability.

Ken Schoonover,
Chair, ANSI A117.1
Committee



Website Spotlight: The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), is making its training available via computers and telephones. JAN, a provider of workplace accommodation information and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will unite national experts on job accommodation and disability employment law to provide training opportunities via one-hour audio conferences and Webcasts in 2006.

The Accommodation and Compliance Training Series provides an opportunity for human resource managers, compliance officers, disability and diversity managers, and other professionals to discover ways to enhance an organization's ability to accommodate and employ people with disabilities.

Topics of the sessions include: "Disability

Etiquette in the Workplace," "EEOC on Job Accommodation Issues," "The ADA at 16: Trends and Developments," "Strategies for Recruiting and Accommodating in the Health Care Industry," and "CAP and JAN: Successful Accommodation Strategies".

The \$25 per session registration fee includes admission for each site to the audio conference or Webcast with accessible training materials and real-time captioning available.

JAN, a free consulting service with more than 22 years of experience, is a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. For more information and registration, go to: www.jan.wvu.edu/teleconf/Teleconf.htm

JAN...will unite national experts on job accommodation and disability employment law to provide training opportunities via one-hour audio conferences and Webcasts in 2006.

Employment Policy Fact Sheets

The Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment has a host of new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fact sheets on its website. The list includes: "Employers and the ADA: Myths and Facts;" "Advancing Opportunities: Accommodations Resources for Federal Managers and Employees;" "Customized Solutions for Today's Workforce: The Job Accommodation Network;" "Diverse Perspectives: People with Disabilities Fulfilling Your Business Goals;" and "Effective Emergency Preparedness Planning: Addressing the Needs of Employees with Disabilities." The fact sheets are available at: www.dol.gov/odep.

HUD Documents Available

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has released its study, *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities: Barriers at Every Step*, and the companion report *Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities: Testing Guidance for Practitioners*. These are the last in a series of reports requested by Congress that use paired testing to measure the level of discrimination in the United States. According to HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson, "We would all like to think we have made more

progress in educating landlords about the Fair Housing Act, but this study paints a different picture of the problems faced daily by people with disabilities. It is imperative that landlords provide people with disabilities the same attention and respect afforded all other potential renters." For more information, visit: www.huduser.org. 

Wal-Mart Installs New Equipment to Protect Privacy of Shoppers with Visual Impairments

In an effort to protect the privacy and security of shoppers with visual impairments, Wal-Mart has begun installing state-of-the-art point of sale devices. The new devices have tactile keys arranged like a standard telephone keypad and will allow shoppers who have difficulty reading information on a flat touchscreen to privately and independently enter their PIN and other confidential information.

"It is impossible for a blind person to enter his or her PIN [on a touchscreen] because there are no tactile keys," says Lainey Feingold, an attorney who works with the California Council of the Blind (CCB). "The only way for a blind person to use the device is to give his or her PIN to a clerk so the clerk can enter it, which is unacceptable. ...too many national retailers have gone to flat screen. We hope Wal-Mart's announcement will alert all retailers that flat screen devices are unacceptable." The effort is the result of collaboration between Wal-Mart and major blind organizations including the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and the CCB. 

CNIB Headquarters, *from page 1*

that it would be an enjoyable experience for people of all abilities.”

Innovative Design Features

The building’s new design is a major departure from the institutional feel of its predecessor. “We’ve created what we believe is a building that combines elements of rehabilitation, business and aesthetic appeal,” says Jim Sanders, CNIB President and CEO. The key features include:

- A prominent and inviting main entrance with level access and an automatic sliding door that does not stigmatize users with disabilities. All staff, consumers and visitors use the same entrance. Users of mobility aids, including guide dogs or scooters, can safely enter and exit without having to search for a separate accessible entrance.

- Accessible parking spaces and a passenger-loading zone are directly in front of the main entrance, along with an exterior waiting area protected from the elements by a large canopy. The transition and separation between the pedestrian walkway and vehicular route is marked by tactile indicator strip, for easy identification.

Immediately upon entering, the main reception counter is color contrasted with surroundings and prominently located for easy identification. It includes both lowered and raised height counters.

The building’s interior layout is intended to be intuitive. The floor plan was designed with a spacious central corridor which also acts as a north-south “spine” for the building. A central corridor is provided at the same location on each floor level, with

visitor areas, staff offices and building amenities situated to the left or right. This is an important wayfinding feature, especially for

first-timers, helping users to find their way throughout the building. The wide corridors allow multiple users to pass each other without the fear of bumping into others or feeling overcrowded – a feature very much appreciated by people with guide dogs or using large mobility devices such as scooters. Other innovative interior design features include:

- **Talking Signs®.** This is a remote, infrared audio system that combines use of a handheld receiver with an overhead transmitter mounted at strategic locations. The user scans the environment with the hand-held receiver. As individual signals are encountered, the users hear the messages, identify where they are located, what is around them and are guided to where they want to go. Talking Signs® can also be programmed to provide other useful information, such as daily menu items available in the cafeteria or messages related to client services.

- **Lighting.** A large window wall provided on one side of the building provides ample natural light. Lighting levels can also be controlled with a translucent window blind/cover system, used to prevent unwanted glare that is problematic for users with visual impairments.

- **Flooring.** Different flooring textures and color contrasted surfaces (e.g., carpet, vinyl and ceramic tile) are used throughout the building to separate areas into distinct “zones.” Color contrasted door frames and baseboards are also used to assist with room identification and mark transitions between walls and floors. Elevator lobbies are easily identifiable through color contrast and distinct flooring materials. A color contrasted, tactile metal flooring surface is also used in the cafeteria as a visual and tactile cue leading safely from the main corridor to serving counters. Interior stair nosings are color contrasted throughout for full visibility, preventing potential tripping hazards. Tactile markers are also provided on staircase landings to warn users of descent.

- **Signage.** Large, tactile maps of each floor are provided in elevator lobbies. Identified as a first in Canada by the CNIB, room identification signage is designed with an angled ledge that provides information in Braille (e.g., users run fingers across the ledge for reading). The

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“The goal was to make a unique building that was not extravagant, but exceptional, one that worked on many levels so that it would be an enjoyable experience for people of all abilities.”

Mary Jane Finlayson,
Architect



A large window wall provides ample natural light.

About the Author: Shane Holten is President of SPH Planning and Consulting Limited, a Canadian firm specializing in planning, designing and building inclusive environments for all. www.sph-planning-consulting.ca

Carbon Monoxide Safety System

UltraGuard, from Electronic Control Systems LLC, is a UL listed proactive carbon monoxide (CO) safety system.

Upon detecting certain CO levels, the system sounds an alarm and shuts off the furnace and water heater. The product recently received a Product Innovation for Consumer Safety Award from the Home Safety Council.



UltraGuard

Accessible Table

Landscape Forms has developed Mingle, an attached table and seating with an off center design. The innovative support design makes a



Mingle

no trip entry possible. The supports are arched to free blowing debris. There are two-, three-, four-, five-, and six-seat versions with and without backs. The three- and

five-seat styles are wheelchair accessible. Umbrellas are optional. Seats may be specified in a variety of polycarbonate colors, or perforated steel.

Portable Ramps

A single fold ramp for scooters and wheelchairs is available from Simple Solutions Online. The Suitcase Ramps come in 2 ft, 3 ft., 4 ft., 5 ft. and 6 ft.

sizes and are designed to bridge the gap over steps, curbs and



Suitcase Ramp

raised landings. The 5- and 6-foot ramps can be used with most minivans, according to the manufacturer. The ramp folds in half, to be carried like a suitcase. It is made of aluminum and features a durable non-skid surface.

Spa-Like Toilet Seat

Bemis Manufacturing Company has introduced the new Purité™ Personal Cleansing Spa, a toilet seat that provides the cleansing and comfort of a European bidet.

Purité is outfitted with two automatic cleansing wands. Cleansing is activated by a touchpad control panel that is located on the side of the seat. With the push of a button,



Purité

nozzles dispense warm water at one of three selected temperatures and five pressure settings.

The retractable hygienic nozzles are self-cleaning and flush automatically before and after each. The seat is also equipped with a special pressure sensor so that cleansing will not commence unless the seat is occupied.

Each wash setting is followed with a warm-air jet dryer. There is a temperature-controlled heated seat and a water purifier that acts as a filter on the current water system for increased purification.

The personal cleansing spa allows the user to be seated while cleansing occurs, unlike standard bidets that require the user to squat over the bowl putting the user in an uncomfortable position that is difficult to maintain for any extended period of time.

The system includes a slow-close hinge, which returns the lid and seat to the closed position and prevents the seat from slamming -- which could cause damage or pinched fingers. To guard against bacteria growth, the seat includes an anti-microbial agent that will prevent mold or mildew build-up. And for cleaning, the seat can be removed for easy access to areas around the hinges and the back of the bowl. 

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Portable Ramps
(Suitcase Ramps)
Simple Solutions Online
sales@simplesolutions-online.co.uk
www.simplesolutions-online.co.uk/ramp.htm

Purité Personal Cleansing Spa
(Spa-Like Toilet Seat)
Bemis®
800.558.7651 (v)
www.bemisecseats.com

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as rebuttal evidence of ADA compliance if later challenged under the ADA.

Notice of the issuance of the final certification of equivalency was published in the *Federal Register* on Dec. 8, 2005. North Carolina is the sixth state to obtain ADA certification for its code. The states of Washington, Texas, Maine, Florida, and Maryland were the first five. Washington, however, has subsequently adopted new accessibility requirements which are awaiting DOJ review.

North Carolina is the sixth state to obtain ADA certification for its code.

Sunoco Reaches Settlement with DOJ

Sunoco Inc., has agreed to improve accessibility at all of its Optima gas stations and convenience stores nationwide. These stores are located on properties leased and operated by Sunoco at various Wal-Mart store locations. Sunoco currently operates 28 Optima stations in Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and West Virginia.

Under the terms of an agreement signed with the Department of Justice (DOJ) on Nov. 29, Sunoco will bring its Optima stores into compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Among the changes to be made to existing and future Optima stores

are: appropriate accessible parking, accessible gasoline pumps, curb ramps, accessible convenience store entrances, access to items for sale within the convenience stores, and refueling assistance at the gas pump upon the request of a customer with a disability. The agreement requires that each existing Optima store manager complete a ADA Maintenance Checklist, as developed by DOJ, once a year for three years. For a copy of the checklist visit, www.ada.gov/sunocooptima.htm.

New Guidelines for Voting Systems

The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) has approved new guidelines that states can follow on a voluntary basis to ensure that voting systems function accurately and reliably. The Voluntary Voting System Guidelines cover usability, including accessibility for people with disabilities, security, and privacy. The guidelines address access issues related to vision, dexterity, mobility, hearing, speech, cognition and English proficiency. The guidelines were developed under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 which Congress enacted in response to the ballot controversies that arose in the presidential election of 2000. The new guidelines are posted on the Commission's website at www.eac.gov. 

CNIB Headquarters, *from page 8*

large size and color contrasted print is beneficial for all users.

Outside of the building, but not yet completed, a "fragrance" garden is planned. Intentionally located away from surrounding noise, the garden is intended to provide clients, staff and visitors with an opportunity to enjoy a variety of scents and textures in a relaxed environment.

Exterior pedestrian routes are ample width and are designed with a variety of surface textures for safe navigation, including tactile indicators where there are changes in level or where walkways intersect with roadways. An enclosed pedestrian overpass also provides a safe and direct route between the CNIB grounds, the pedestrian sidewalk and a bus stop which is located across a busy street. Also, the

main intersection leading into the site from a busy roadway is equipped with an Accessible Pedestrian Signal device for safe crossing, including a tactile feature for deafblind users.

It is the combination of these innovative interior and exterior features, both subtle and well integrated into the overall design, that makes this building a model of universal design and an example from which others can learn. The "universal" character of this building is best described by Christopher Hume of the Toronto Star newspaper, as "extraordinary in its ordinariness."

For more information, contact Lesley MacDonald, Accessibility Services Coordinator, CNIB Accessible Design Services at: 416-486-2500 extension 7016 or by e-mail at Lesley.MacDonald@CNIB.ca. 

Elaine Ostroff, from page 4

ence made this a learning opportunity for all.

According to Elizabeth Ericson, a juror on the Best of Accessible Boston Committee, “Elaine insisted that the awards’ jurors, of which I was one, accompany people using wheelchairs into the places seeking to be recognized for their universal design. The awards program was not to be a ‘beauty contest’ but a learning experience for all involved. It was the experience that turned me into an advocate for universal design through my professional career.”

In 1989, Ostroff developed the Universal Design in Education Project (UDEP) with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. This groundbreaking, grass-roots effort – to engage design faculty in rethinking their teaching so that future designers would creatively address the needs of a diverse society – inspired similar programs in Norway, Sweden, Belgium and Japan. The project has evolved into the Global Universal Design Educator’s Online Network with more than 400 participating educators. Inspired by the late Ron Mace, FAIA, Ostroff created the Ac-

cess to Design Professions project in 1999 to increase diversity in the profession and to improve the practice of universal design by encouraging people with disabilities to enter the design professions. In 2004, she received the Misha Black Memorial Medal for Distinguished Services to Design Education – only the third American to receive this British honor in its 26-year history.



Ostroff (pictured on the left) is working on a play lab in the 1970s.

When pressed about her proudest accomplishment, Ostroff hesitates, “I tend to look ahead and see what needs to be done. When I look back or am reminded of some project, I think about the team that came together and what grew out of our shared effort. I was fearless in those early years.

Nothing seemed impossible -- I didn’t know what couldn’t be done.”

Since retiring from Adaptive Environments in 1998, Ostroff has been as busy as ever. She finds her motivation in “...a new problem to solve, especially one where I can infiltrate with a universal design approach,” she says. “Increasingly, I’m excited by what is happening and what I can impact in my own small town.”

“...I was fearless in those early years. Nothing seemed impossible - I didn’t know what couldn’t be done....”

Elaine Ostroff

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April 10-12, 2006: National ADA Symposium & Expo, St. Louis. Hosted by the Network of ADA/IT Centers, project of NIDRR.. **Contact:** www.adasyposium.org

April 18-20, 2006: National Symposium on Playground Access, Indiana University-Bloomington, Bloomington, IN. Sponsored by National Center on Accessibility. **Contact:** www.ncaonline.org

April 24-26, 2006: Building for Boomers & Beyond: 50+ Housing Symposium, Phoenix, AZ. Sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders. **Contact:** www.nahb.org/meeting_details.aspx?meetingID=1501

May 5, 2006: ADA Questions Answered and Answered Questions, Minneapolis. AIA-registered course repeated in May and June. **Contact:** www.designarts.net/das60.htm or 800.264.9605

May 2 & 5, 2006: ADA Stakeholders Dialogues, Chicago. Sponsored by the National Council on Disability. Organized by the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund. **Contact:** www.dredf.org

May 30-June 3, 2006: IFA 8th Global Conference on Aging, Copenhagen, Denmark. This conference will highlight cross-cultural cooperation to meet the challenges of global aging and address important region-specific issues of aging. **Contact:** www.global-ageing.dk

June 5-6, 2006: 2006 Design for Aging Symposium, Overland Park, KS. Sponsored by the American Institute of Architects and the Aging Research Institute. **Contact:** 785.233.7443 (v)

June 7-8, 2006: American Institute of Architects 2006 National Convention & Design Expo, Los Angeles, CA. Will include sessions on the Fair Housing Act Accessibility Guidelines. **Contact:** www.aia.org.

June 18-21, 2007: Transend 2007, 11th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons, Montreal, Canada. **Contact:** www.tc.gc.ca/transend2007

Oct. 22-26, 2006: 2nd International Conference on Universal Design, Kyoto, Japan. Sponsored by the International Association of Universal Design and Kyoto Prefecture. **Contact:** www.ud2006.net/en

Events to be placed in the UDN Calendar must be submitted to the editor two months before the publication date.

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