



FROM THE PUBLISHER OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 2

March 2011

www.UniversalDesign.com

Universal Design News and Information Roundup

Highlighting What You May Have Missed...

So much information comes across our desks and computers on a daily basis, it's easy to miss something you might otherwise be interested in. **UDN Direct** has pulled together highlights of recent stories and information of interest for you.

More on the “Myths about Universal Design”

(Editor's Note: The February issue of **UDN Direct** included “10 Myths about Universal Design,” authored by Rosemarie Rossetti, PhD, a nationally known speaker, trainer, author and consultant who is building a national model Universal Design home in Columbus, OH. The article provoked a great deal of discussion, and readers called our attention to similar resources which included “myths about UD.” The following article was authored by Ed Steinfeld, ArchD, AIA, professor of architecture and director of the IDEA Center at the University of Buffalo, SUNY.)

In 2001, the IDEA Center published **Universal Design New York**. (The book is still available at <http://udeworld.com/dissemination/publications.html>.) In that book we listed and described seven “Myths about Universal Design.” Our book focuses on public accommodations, so the myths are somewhat different than Rosemarie Rossetti's. Her list provides a nice addition to our list with its focus on housing. Maybe there are more for other design domains like transportation, products and urban design?

A comment on Rosemarie's “10 Myths”: Myth #9 is written in a way that implies that UD homes must have elevators or lifts. There are some bottom line requirements for UD in homes, but a lift or elevator should not be one of them. This will only perpetuate the myth that UD homes are more expensive. Homes are improved over time by all households. Even Frank Lloyd Wright's clients made changes. A multistory home can have stacked closets or other features that facilitate future construction of a lift.

Recently, we published **Inclusive Housing: A Pattern Book**, available at Amazon and through bookstores. This book is filled with ideas on how to achieve Universal Design in single family housing and small apartment buildings, including row houses and live-work units. Unlike previous books on this subject, it gives detailed attention to the neighborhood, the block and the lot as well as the house. What good is a Universally Designed home if you can't benefit from the neighborhood in which it is located?

UD on TV...

Two videotaped segments about Universal Design have recently hit the internet, and both include footage from the International Builders Show held in Orlando in January. Both segments also examine the growing popularity of, and need for, Universally Designed homes and products, although through two different lenses.

The first segment, "Homes That Help You Take Aging in Stride," appeared on MarketWatch's web site. It examines how UD features in homes can be valuable to people of all generations, and features product trends in the bathroom and the kitchen. Included in the video is commentary from Esther Greenhouse, an environmental gerontologist, as well as Mike McGowan, chair of the National Association of Home Builders' 50+ Housing Council. The video can be accessed via MarketWatch's web site at: <http://www.marketwatch.com/video/asset/marketwatch%20video/D2C03AD5-9310-47A2-871B-6B9969D2AD0B?siteid=nwhpf#!D2C03AD5-9310-47A2-871B-6B9969D2AD0B>.

The second segment, "Safe Remodeling: The New Retirement," appeared on CNBC. As its title suggests, this video explored what is being done to support aging in place for both those nearing retirement age and their elderly parents. AARP's Amy Levner appeared in the video, which touched on some UD trends in home remodeling. The video is available on CNBC's web site at: <http://www.cnn.com/id/15840232?video=3000004877&play=1>.

San Francisco to Help Merchants on Access Issues

The city of San Francisco is taking steps to help its merchants understand the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and what measures they will need to take to avoid a lawsuit. City restaurants were sent information about their obligations under the ADA along with their annual health permit mailings last month, and city officials are brainstorming ways to reach out to business owners with the same information. Opportunity Fund, a local microlender, has pledged \$1 million in small business loans for businesses needing assistance with renovations.

These actions come on the heels of a number of lawsuits filed against merchants in several of the city's commercial districts. Some businesses in both the Richmond and Mission Districts closed before the end of 2010 because they could not afford to fight the lawsuits or renovate their stores. (In California, federal ADA suits can be combined with the state's Unruh Civil Rights Act, under which a plaintiff can demand \$4,000 per impediment encountered.) This is the most significant effort undertaken by the city of San Francisco in this regard. Read more at: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=%2Fc%2Fa%2F2011%2F01%2F13%2FB401H8M9O.DTL>.

As Service Animals Multiply, DOJ Ready for Enforcement

For years, service animals, mainly dogs, have been used to help individuals with visual and hearing impairments with getting around safely. However, the various uses of service animals have expanded in recent years, with dogs now being used to help people

detect the onset of seizures, alert diabetics when their glucose levels drop too low, and remind psychiatric patients to take their medicine. But the expanding responsibilities of service animals—and the diversity of service animals growing to include miniature horses, lizards and birds—has led to an abuse of the system. And the confusion over what is a legitimate service animal—and a legitimate reason to need one—has led in some cases to “reduced access for many individuals with disabilities who use trained service animals that adhere to high behavioral standards.” The **Wall Street Journal** reported on this issue just weeks before a provision in the revised Americans with Disabilities Act will mandate that miniature horses (where feasible) may be considered service animals. Read more at:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703652104576122461180284204.html>.

There's Still Time to Submit Your Big UD Idea...

There's still time for architects, design students and allied design professionals to submit sketches to the International 2011 YAF/COD Ideas Competition, sponsored by the AIA Young Architects Forum (YAF) and the AIA Committee on Design (COD). For this year's competition, submitters are asked to explore the concept of Universal Design as well as its overlap with values of social and environmental sustainability. Entrants are asked to propose a vision for Tokyo's bid for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games that is guided not only by socially- and environmentally-sustainable principles, but also by the concept of Universal Design. This year's design problem is **to create a master plan for the Olympic Village and a design for a representative mixed-use building that includes athlete housing**. Successful solutions will demonstrate a commitment to Universal Design, as well as social and environmental sustainability, throughout the Village during its Olympic, Paralympic and Legacy modes, by creating designs that will allow the Village to play a vital role in the ongoing development of the City of Tokyo – not only for the short term, as athlete housing during the Games, but also for the long term, as a catalyst for infrastructural revitalization once the Games have closed.

The submission deadline is **March 14, 2011**. Download the competition's Call for Entries at: <http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab087247.pdf>.

Events on the Horizon

- **March 7-9, 2011: US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board Meeting**, Washington, DC. Details: <http://www.access-board.gov/about/meetings.htm>.
- **March 10, 2011: ADA Title II & Title III: Revised Regulations**, DBTAC: Mid-Atlantic Training Center session, Silver Spring, MD. Details: http://www.regonline.com/title_ii_and_iii_revised_regulations.

- **March 14-19, 2011: 2011 CSUN Conference (26th Annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference)**, San Diego, CA. Details: <http://www.csunconference.org/index.cfm?EID=80000300&p=378>.
- **April 11-14, 2011: “The Americans with Disabilities Act: A New Road Map,” National Spring Conference of the National Association of ADA Coordinators**, Miami, FL. Details: www.askjan.org/naadac.
- **April 12-15, 2011: Retrofitting for Accessibility: A National Center on Accessibility Training Course**, Bloomington, IN. Details: www.ncaonline.org.
- **April 18-20, 2011: Include 2011: The 6th International Conference on Inclusive Design**, Royal College of Art, London, UK. Details: <http://www.hhc.rca.ac.uk/2968/all/1/include-2011.aspx>.
- **April 26-28, 2011: Kitchen & Bath Industry Show**, Las Vegas, NV. UD expert Mary Jo Peterson will lead a session entitled “Universal Design Today” on April 27 from 3:00-5:00 pm. Details: <http://www.kbis.com>.

For additional UD-related events, visit: <http://udconsultants.com/news/calendar-of-events>.