



MCDD QUICK NEWS

**Here's What's Happening in Council Offices
for the months of June, July & August 2005**

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT TURNS 15

The Americans with Disabilities Act turned 15 years old on July 26, 2005. Hailed as landmark civil rights legislation when signed into law by the first President Bush, the ADA brought celebration to persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, the past 15 years have not been kind to the ADA. Courts have steadily whittled away at the ADA's protections and reduced the number of persons with disabilities it covers. Strengthened by US Supreme Court's actions, businesses, state and local governments and even school districts have increasingly ignored the law. The promise that was the Americans with Disabilities Act has been broken far more times than it has been kept. One wonders what the country's reaction would be to these same assaults on other civil rights legislation. . . . We must remain vigilant in our support of the Americans with Disabilities Act!

COUNCIL HOLDS ANNUAL FUNDING MEETING

The Council held its annual funding meeting on June 23 and 24, 2005 at the Wingate Inn in Helena. Given ongoing commitments the Council opted to not issue any new Calls for Investment for FFY2006, and instead focused on current projects.

Projects receiving Council for FFY2006 are:

- People First of Montana
- People First Conference/Mona Monopoly
- Eaglemount Helena - therapeutic recreation
- SilverBow DD Council - Awareness Play "Same Difference"
- Montana Youth Leadership Forum

As the Council starts the planning phases for the 2007-2012 Long Range Plan, Call for Investment topics and goals will be developed and released.

COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR FFY2006 ELECTED

Congratulations to newly elected Council officers for FFY 2006. Jan Wenaas, parent-advocate from Great Falls has been elected Council Chair

and Melissa Clark, self-advocate from Great Falls has been elected Council Vice-Chair. The new officers take office on October 1.

RECOGNITION DINNER HELD FOR PAULA HOLDEMAN AND LEN NOPEN

It's always hard to say goodbye when members' transition from the Council and it was no different on June 23 when Paula Holdeman and Len Nopen were toasted at their Recognition Dinner. The dinner was held on the patio of the Red Fox Supper Club at Fox Ridge Golf Course, and a grand time was had by all. Paula and Len received achievement awards made of marble and addressed the members of the Council. We wish Paula and Len only the best in the future as they go on to new adventures!

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNCIL SEEKING MEMBERS

The Vocational Rehabilitation program is recruiting for members for their federally-mandated Vocational Rehabilitation Council. In addition to providing advice, ideas and concerns for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Council conducts the consumer satisfaction survey, makes recommendations to the Governor and writes the annual Governor's report. The Council meets four times a year for two days; most meetings are in Helena and travel expenses are reimbursed. Over half of the members must have a disability.

They will have nine vacancies by the end of the summer. Some of the vacancies are defined in federal law, but most are disability advocates. We like to have representatives from many disability groups and from many parts of the state. Here are our vacancies:

1. Members of the State Workforce Investment Board
2. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
3. 7 Advocates; they would like a broad distribution of disabilities including visual, hearing, orthopedic, brain injury

If you are interested in applying for one of these positions please provide the following information, on paper and return it to Peggy Williams, Montana Vocational Rehabilitation, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59620.

Name, address, phone (work and home), email address (if you have one)

1. Do you have a disability? _____ yes or no If yes, please briefly describe.
2. Do you have the interest and commitment to participate in the work of the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Council as well as participate in at least one work team or committee?
3. Briefly describe your knowledge of disability, Vocational Rehabilitation and employment issues.

COUNCIL SETS FFY2006 MEETING CALENDAR

MCDD adopted the meeting schedule for FFY 2006 at the June Council meeting. By setting the meeting calendar a year in advance we try to have the best attendance possible at each meeting.

Meeting are scheduled for:

October 12, 13, 14 2005
January 25, 26, 27, 2006
March 22, 23, 24, 2006
June 21, 22, 23, 2006
August 16, 17, 18, 2006 Training Meeting

All meetings are held in Helena.

US SURGEON GENERAL ISSUES FIRST CALL TO ACTION ON DISABILITY

US Surgeon General Richard Carmona has released, "The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Improve the Health and Wellness of Persons with Disabilities," appealing to all Americans to help increase the quality of life for persons with disabilities through better health and understanding.

"Developed by the Surgeon General in collaboration with the HHS Office on Disability, the Call to Action describes the particular challenges to health and well being faced by persons of all ages with disabilities four goals that, together, can help people with disabilities experience full, rewarding and above all healthy lives are contributing members of their communities."

The four goals included in the Call to Action are:

- Increase understanding nationwide that people with disabilities can lead long, healthy and productive lives
- Increase knowledge among health care professionals and provide them with tools to screen, diagnose and treat the whole person with a disability with dignity
- Increase awareness among people with disabilities of the steps they can take to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Increase accessible health care and support services to promote independence for people with disabilities.

The "Surgeon General's Call to Action to Improve the Health and Wellness of Persons with Disabilities" is available at www.surgeongeneral.gov

DISABILITY COUNTS WEBSITE

Here's a website from our network partner the Rural Institute with data on the number of people with disabilities per county and per Congressional district.

<http://disabilitycounts.org>

DATES OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Here's an overview of meeting dates and events that may be of interest:

August 25 Disability Action Alliance Meeting Helena

Sept 7 MT Transportation Partnership Meeting Helena

Contact Council staff for more information on any of these meetings.

ETC. . . .

We hope this brief and informal newsletter is helpful for Council members and others. If you have a question on any item presented or would like to see additional items in future newsletter please contact Council staff at 866-443-4332.



Enjoy your summer!!!