**News from the Federal Agencies**

**U.S. Access Board**

**Sachin Dev Pavithran Elected Chair of the Access Board**

The U.S. Access Board unanimously elected Sachin Dev Pavithran as its new Chair on March 11. Pavithran of Logan, Utah is Program Director of the Utah Assistive Technology Program at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities. He was named to the Access Board by President Barack Obama in 2012.

[Read More about Sachin Dev](#)

**EEOC Sends Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on ADA and Wellness Programs to OMB**

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on March 20 voted to send a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on the interplay of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) with respect to wellness programs to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This proposed rule would amend the regulations implementing the equal employment provisions of the ADA to address the interaction between Title I of the ADA and financial incentives as part of wellness programs offered through group health plans.

[Read More about the EEOC Proposed Rule on Wellness Programs and the ADA](#)

**EEOC Seeks Public Input on Plan to Review its Significant Regulations**

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced that it is inviting the public to provide input on its ongoing review of significant existing EEOC regulations to determine whether they should be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed. The review is conducted pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13563, "Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Comments may be submitted to [Public.Comments.RegulatoryReview@eeoc.gov](mailto:Public.Comments.RegulatoryReview@eeoc.gov) through April 20, 2015.

[Read More about the EEOC Initiative](#)

**The Lash Group Will Pay $75,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit**

The Lash Group, a Charlotte, N.C.-based consulting company, will pay $75,000 and provide equitable relief to settle a federal disability discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced. According to the EEOC’s suit, Meron Debru worked as a reimbursement case advocate at The Lash Group’s Rockville, Md., facility when she went on maternity leave. She received short-term disability benefits while on maternity leave and advised the disability benefits carrier that she needed...
additional unpaid leave due to post-partum depression. The Lash Group initially fired her.

Read More about the EEOC Settlement with The Lash Group

Great Lakes In Focus

The ADA Legacy Project

The ADA Legacy Project was conceived by Mark Johnson, Director of Advocacy at the Shepard Center in Atlanta, and further developed during a retreat with disability leaders from across the nation. The first retreat was held at the Shepherd Center. This group set the goals of the project:

**Preserve**

- We preserve our past by partnering with those who work to collect, promote and exhibit materials from the disability rights movement.

**Celebrate**

- We celebrate our present by partnering with those who work to honor the milestones and accomplishments of the disability rights movement, including the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Educate**

- We educate our future by partnering with those who work to raise awareness of the history, contributions and issues still facing people with disabilities, developing our next generation of advocate

The mission of The ADA Legacy Project is to honor the contributions of people with disabilities and their allies by:

- preserving the history of the disability rights movement;
- celebrating its milestones; and
- educating the public and future generations of advocates.

Preservation, celebration, and education: this is how we will honor this historic civil rights legislation and create its legacy: a world in which every citizen is
digital inclusion and the various strategies that advocates have at their disposal to effectively use those laws. We’ll look at the law’s role in expanding digital access in education, finance, healthcare, retail and more. Can effective use of the law help close the digital divide? What do you think? There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. Participants will learn:

- What laws (in the U.S.) require digital accessibility and how are they being implemented
- What does the U.S. Department of Justice have to say about digital accessibility
- Does the law protect the privacy of financial and health information for people with disabilities.

Speakers:
Lainey Feingold, Law Office of Lainey Feingold
For more information visit ADA Audio Conference site at http://www.ada-audio.org/or call (877) 232-1990.

AccessibilityOnline Webinar Series
Access Board Sponsored Research Projects
June 4th, 2015 1:30-3:00 CT.
Most of the Board’s research projects are designed to develop information to use in writing or updating design criteria and/or develop technical assistance material. This session will provide an overview of the diverse projects completed since the late 1990’s including anthropometry for persons with disabilities and wheeled mobility, exterior surfaces, playground surfaces, swimming pool accessibility, and much more.

Speakers:
Rex Pace, Senior Accessibility Specialist and Technical Assistance Coordinator, US Access Board
Peggy H. Greenwell, Accessibility Specialist, Office of Technical and Information Services, US Access Board
For more information visit AccessibilityOnline at http://www.accessibilityonline.org or call (877) 232-1990.

The ADA Legacy Bus recently completed the first portion of our cross-country tour commemorating the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Overseen by The ADA Legacy Project, the bus has partnered with many sponsors and organizations around the country to accomplish this extraordinary effort, which covered more than 11,000 miles with stops at city halls, disability organizations, public schools, universities, disability conferences and Abilities Expos, while driving through 18 states.

Tom Olin, a social documentarian of the disability rights movement for over 30 years, has proven a familiar face on the tour. His photographs have been featured at the Smithsonian Institute and at the United Nations, as well as in the Washington Post and numerous publications and books. Tom has served as a unifying force in connecting communities across the nation to educate the public on 25 years of the ADA.

History of the ADA Bus
The ADA bus was originally procured for the 2006-2007 Road to Freedom, a tour which promoted the importance of the 2008 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act. This tour was inspired by the historic 50-state journey taken in 1983 by Justin and Yoshiko Dart as a fact-finding mission for the National Council on the Handicapped. The Darts toured again in 1988, that time to garner grassroots support for the burgeoning Americans with Disabilities Act.

The present ADA Tour builds on these past efforts by paying tribute to the cross-disability efforts that culminated in the passage of this historic civil rights
legislation. We invite communities nationwide to come together in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the ADA this coming July 26, 2015.

**About the 2014 - 2015 ADA Legacy Tour**

The 2014-15 tour began with an impromptu champagne christening by Youth Organizing (YO)! Disabled and Proud, a grassroots disability rights group led by and for young adults and youth with disabilities. Christina Mills, Deputy Director of the California Foundation for Independent Living, and Sarah Triano, Executive Officer at the California Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities, arranged the spirited event at the capitol building in Sacramento, California. The energy was palpable and unifying.

Mentoring young leaders with disabilities is one important aspect of The ADA Legacy Project, as well as supporting their fresh interests, outlooks, and political work. Communication between three generations of disability leaders and advocates has been an especially fruitful outcome of the tour. When people with disabilities, especially young people, see the bus, their initial reaction is excitement, followed by photos and selfies with the ADA Bus and its crew.

Despite the success of organizations like YO!, there are still problems of segregation, undereducation, unemployment, and institutionalization in the disability community. The disability civil rights movement coalesced later than other civil rights movements, and mainstream society still does not honor, respect, or integrate disability culture. For young leaders who experience exclusion and bullying even today, connecting with the bus and affirms their own worth as part of a strong, vibrant community. For the pre-ADA generation, the bus and exhibits draw out their knowledge of history and validate their life experiences.

The ADA Tour travels with interactive exhibits that draw people with disabilities of all ages and cultures. These include:

- A four-panel display on the history of self-advocacy, courtesy of the Museum of disABILITY History;
- Displays on The ADA Legacy Project and its efforts to preserve disability history, celebrate major milestones and educate future generations of disability advocates;
- "Because of the ADA . . ." booth where advocates post their thoughts and photos to illustrate the difference the ADA has made in their lives;
- The ADA quilt where advocates add their signature to thousands of others who have participated in the Tour;
- Displays on the history of the Road to Freedom Tour;
- An information table with handouts on The ADA Legacy Project and the ADA Network, plus information from the project's partners and sponsors; and
- Events, workshops, artifacts, and other programming provided by local hosts

**Visit the ADA Legacy Project homepage**

For more information please call 800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY) or Online via Contact Us form.

Great Lakes ADA Center
University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Disability and Human Development (MC 728)
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 405
Chicago, Illinois 60608-6904
Accessible Technology
Webinar Series
Turning Text Into Speech: Real World Applications and Examples
July 16, 2015
Computers these days have a lot to say but only if you know the right way to ask them. With text-to-speech a user can have the computer read almost any text out loud. This can be a life changing tool for people who are blind, low vision, or have a print related disability. But what are these tools, how do they work, and what does it look like in real life for an everyday user? In this Webinar we will explore text-to-speech tools available on computers, tablets, and smart phones through the use of real world examples. As a trainer of blind and low vision computer users Jonathan has gained a significant amount of hands-on experience of text-to-speech technology and will demonstrate the way his clients find success with text-to-speech tools. You'll also learn how people with print related disabilities like dyslexia can leverage these tools to find success. Demonstrations will include:

- Screen readers like JAWS for Windows and VoiceOver for Apple devices
- Text-to-Speech and magnification software like ZoomText and MAGic
- Built-in reading tools on the iPad and iPhone like Speak Selection and Speak Screen
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software like the KNFB Reader and ABBYY FineReader
- Highlight and read tools like NaturalReader and Snap&Read and more

Demonstrations will include both paid and free software options.
Speakers:
Jonathan Campbell
Assistive Technology Specialist Minnesota State Services for the Blind
For more information visit ADA Audio Conference site at

The Docket

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission vs. Ford Motor Corp

The full panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit affirmed a lower court's summary judgement decision in favor of Ford Motor Company on April 10, 2015. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC had filed suit against Ford alleging violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)).

The EEOC had charged that Ford violated the ADA by denying a former employee the opportunity to telework and by firing her after she filed an EEOC charge.

The EEOC sued Ford Motor in 2011, charging that the company's denial of Jane Harris's request to work from home up to four days a week as an accommodation for her irritable bowel syndrome violated the ADA, and that Ford had then retaliated against her by firing her after she filed an EEOC charge. Ford's telecommuting policy authorized employees to work up to four days a week from a telecommuting site. Harris was a resale steel buyer whose job primarily required telephone and computer contact with coworkers and suppliers.

The district court granted summary judgment for Ford Motor, holding that attendance at the job site was an essential function of Harris's job, and that Harris's disability-related absences meant that she was not a "qualified" individual under the ADA. The lower court also ruled that Harris's telework request was not a reasonable accommodation for her job. The district court also said the EEOC could not prove Harris's termination was retaliatory because it was based on attendance and performance issues that pre-dated her charge filing.

From the ADA Expert

Question: I experienced my second seizure at work in the past week. These were the first seizures I have had in over a year and the first ones that have occurred at work. My employer now wants me to provide documentation from my physician. What information am I required to provide and what information does my employer have the right to receive from me under the ADA? Can my employer share this information with my co-workers?

Answer:

The ADA prohibits covered employers from discriminating on the basis of disability against qualified individuals with disabilities in all employment practices. A covered employer is one with 15 or more full or part-time employees. An employer may hire, fire, or promote the most qualified individual he/she chooses. The ADA prohibits that covered employer from making the decision on whom to hire, fire, or promote on the basis of disability.

An employer in certain instances has the right to request medical information that is job related and consistent with business necessity. If an employee is having difficulty performing the job and the employer based on objective information has a reasonable belief that it is related to a medical condition or disability or that the
individual may be a direct threat to the health and safety of himself/herself or others then the employer has the right to receive limited medical information.

The employer has the right to information from an employee indicating that the employee is able to perform the job or essential functions of the position or that the employee is not a direct threat to himself/herself or to others. Direct threat means that there is a significant risk of substantial harm to himself or others. This should not be based on assumptions or perceptions about a medical condition but should be based on current and relevant medical information.

An employer should provide a job description to the employee's physician so the physician understands the job duties associated with the job. The employer does not have the right to a complete medical history and only information related to the medical condition in question.

An employer is prohibited from sharing medical information with co-workers. Any medical information an employer receives should be kept confidential and in a separate file from the employee's regular work file.

For additional information please contact the Great Lakes ADA Center at (800) 949-4232 (V/TTY) or by completing the online form: http://adagreatlakes.com/WebForms/ContactUs/