



# ICED NEWS

State Interagency Committee On Employees With Disabilities

Volume 9, Number 2

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## ICED AWARDS CEREMONY

ICED recognized the efforts and accomplishments of following individuals and organizations during an awards ceremony held in Springfield:

### State Employee of the Year

Lloyd Crombie from the Illinois Department of Employment Security was recognized as the State Employee of the Year. Mr. Crombie exemplifies the model of an outstanding public servant as demonstrated by his work ethic, collegiality with co-workers and continued efforts to deliver a strong work product of benefit to the State and the citizenry served.

### Candlelight Award

The Candlelight Award was presented to the individual or organization that has raised visibility and awareness of the barriers or issues that impact persons with disabilities locally, regionally or nationally. This year's re-



Left to right: Front: John Miller, Dave Dailey. Back: Chuck Hartke, Ray Luna, Jeff Standerfer, Lloyd Crombie, Rep. Annazette Collins, Audrey McCrimon, John Wozniak, Brenda Yarnell, Charles Onufer, and Fernando Chavarria

ipient, Harold Washington College (HWC), was chosen because of the model of physical and program accessibility that HWC provides to other colleges and the community at large.

### Service Partnership Award

The Service Partnership Award was presented to United Cerebral Palsy Land of Lincoln for its efforts towards their mission "...that every person has a right to live to their fullest potential" and its work in cooperation with the State to help reduce the underutilization rate of persons with disabilities in Illinois.

### Legislator of the Year

Representative Annazette Collins was presented the Legislator of the Year Award for her efforts on behalf of state employees with disabilities.

### Certificates of Appreciation

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the following agency leaders for their support of employees with disabilities: Dr. Carol Adams, Department of Human Services; Paul Campbell, Central Management Services; Rocco Claps, Department of Human Rights; Charles Hartke, Department of Agriculture; Robert Kilbury, Rh.D., Department of Human Services; Audrey McCrimon, Department of Human Services; Anne McElroy, Central Management Services; John Miller, Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission; Brenda Russell, Illinois Department of Employment Security; Dr. Charles Onufer, Division of Specialized Care for Children; Dr. Shelia Romano, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities; and Jeff Standerfer, Department of Human Services.

## ICED ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*“As social movements mature, they begin to look beyond the ‘letter of the law’, which emphasizes ethics and values, and promulgate systemic changes in attitudes, behaviors and institutional structures.”*

- Leslie Kanes Weisman

As a committee serving people with disabilities, an important part of ICED’s mission is outreach and engagement, serving employees through a variety of activities. In short, the goal of the conference held on September 12 in Springfield was to encourage the kind of change suggested by Leslie Kanes Weisman in the opening quote.

It is the intent that the annual conference serves as a catalyst for positive change and a springboard for collaborations with our partners in education, business, public and social service. Each year ICED provides a forum for individuals and agencies to expand their knowledge and perspectives and an opportunity to increase community resources through the synergy of collaboration.

The conferences are designed to bring a diverse audience together to discuss the full spectrum of disability issues and experiences. This year’s conference, “Making It Work Through Technology,” was no exception.

The conference began with a presentation by Barry T. Taylor, Legal Advocacy Director, Equip for Equality, entitled “ADA, Employment and the Courts – What Lies Ahead.” During his presentation, Mr. Taylor discussed the courts recent interpretations of the ADA and how those decisions impact people with disabilities.



An awards ceremony was held in conjunction with the conference lunch program.

Lynette Strode and Eric Guidish, Demonstration Center Coordinators with the Illinois Assistive Technology Project (IATP), followed discussing adaptive technology, the IATP assistive device loan program and the Techconnect Low Interest Loan program.

After the IATP presentation, it was time for audience participation facilitated by Michael Knepler and Elaine Lazell where conference-goers were encouraged to describe their own success stories relating to overcoming obstacles and removing barriers.

While attendees were learning about success stories and techniques, a special forum for agency directors and their representatives was held to discuss “Strategies and Sources to Support Successful Disability Hiring Activities.” The forum was moderated by Robert Kilbury, Ph.D., Director, Rehabilitation Services; Audrey McCrimon, Assistant to the Secretary, Compliance, Access and Workplace Safety, DHS; and Anne McElroy, Deputy Director, Bureau of Personnel, Central Management Services.

The conference then moved along to the presentation of awards mentioned on the previous page.

Glenn Hedman, PE, ATP, RET, Department of Disability and Human Development Director, Assistive Technology Unit, University of Illinois at Chicago, wrapped up the days’ events with his presentation, “The Key is Technology,” where he discussed his groups’ work on designing and implementing adaptive technology.

Handouts and more about the conference can be found online at [www.state.il.us/iced/conference](http://www.state.il.us/iced/conference).



Participants at the ICED conference in Springfield

## **!! SUCCESS STORIES !!**

### **Toll Highway Authority**

The Toll Highway Authority (the Tollway) has strived to broaden diversity by reaching out to people with disabilities over the last three years. The percentage of employees with disabilities has steadily increased from 7% in FY 2003 to 10% in FY 2005, even as the Tollway implemented staff reductions to make the most of existing resources. The Tollway has hired ICED interns, which provides valuable services to both the agency and the students by providing meaningful jobs during the summer months while they attend college. The Illinois Tollway was honored by ICED with an award in 2003.

The Tollway encourages its staff to examine issues affecting people with disabilities (opening the door for employment) through education and training. Articles involving disability employment and awareness are included in The Tollway Trailblazer, the employee newsletter. For the past two years, the Tollway has also shown a video on Disability Awareness in its headquarter's cafeteria. These efforts encourage managers and supervisors to be more open to employing people with disabilities.

In addition to recruiting employees with disabilities, retention is important as well. To ensure that people with disabilities are welcome at the Tollway and appropriately accommodated, the agency uses the services provided by the Great Lakes ADA Center and the Job Accommodation Network for assistance with employee accommodation requests. Further, the Tollway has used the services of the University of Illinois' Institute on Disability and Human Development to make work area improvements.

For more information about this agency's program, call Mary T. Wright, at (630) 241-6800, ext. 1010.

### **State Retirement Systems**

Although this agency is relatively small, 81 total employees, it has endeavored over the years to recruit people with disabilities. It is in parity for this group for FY06 with 9 employees with disabilities or 11.1% of its staff. In FY05, it had significant underutilization for the first time in four years. One thing this agency did was to make use of the Successful Disability Opportunities Program (formerly: Severely Disabled Option) to recruit an employee with a disability. For further information about SERS' experience with this program, call Ms. Nantkes, at (217) 558-2473.

For more information about the Successful Disability Opportunities Program, contact Jaci Debrun, CMS Disabled Workers Program Coordinator, at (217) 524-1321 or (217) 785-3979 (TTY).

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION ISSUES & TECHNIQUES FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**

As part of ICED's series of training classes/conferences related to disability awareness and career advancement issues, Robin Jones, of the Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center, lead a discussion on reasonable accommodation issues and techniques for state employees to prepare themselves for promotions.

The training, as well as the question and answer session which followed, was well attended. Employees participated in person, by teleconference, and on-line through streaming audio and live captioning.

Robin Jones focused the training towards people with disabilities who may need to be accommodated in their jobs and those supervisors or managers who are dealing with those requests. She touched on several areas of reasonable accommodation which are most commonly asked about and/or are most frequently seen in case law or complaints.

The training began with an overview of what is a reasonable accommodation and what is the definition of a disability. This led quickly into how to make a request for an accommodation and understanding the employee's and employer's rights and responsibilities regarding the request. This was followed with a question and answer session.



Audio and text copies of this training are available on the ICED website at [www.state.il.us/ICED/training](http://www.state.il.us/ICED/training).

## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS**

Improving access to new information technology, such as the Internet and cell phones, for persons with disabilities will be the focus of this year's International Day of Disabled Persons which is December 3, 2006.

Although access to information and communication technology has created opportunities for everyone, these advances have been particularly meaningful for persons with disabilities, allowing them to overcome the societal barriers of prejudice, infrastructure and inaccessible formats that stand in the way of participation.

But, many persons with disabilities remain unable to take full advantage of the Internet, because most websites are inaccessible to the blind and visually impaired, heavily dependent on using the mouse, and because training is often conducted in inaccessible formats and venues.

## DISABILITY TREATY PASSED BY UN

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in New York. This is the first human rights treaty of the 21st Century, and the UN hopes it will mark a significant improvement in the treatment of disabled people.

The convention safeguarding the world's 650 million disabled people from discrimination was approved by a UN general assembly panel and is expected to take effect as early as 2008 or 2009.

Those countries that sign up to it will have to enact laws and other measures to improve disability rights and also agree to get rid of legislation, customs and practices that discriminate against disabled people.

The thinking behind the convention is that welfare and charity should be replaced by new rights and freedoms. Currently only 45 countries have specific legislation that protects disabled people.

The convention recognizes that a change of attitude is vital if disabled people are to achieve equal status - countries that ratify it will be obliged to combat negative stereotypes and prejudices and to promote an awareness of people's abilities and contribution to society.

## GOOGLE ACCESSIBLE SEARCH

A Beta version of Google's new *Accessible Search*, launched recently, is an exciting concept. *Accessible Search* is an early



Google Labs product designed to identify and prioritize search results that are more easily usable by people who are blind or vision impaired. It is based on the regular Google search, in that it finds web sites that best match your search keywords. However, Accessible Search goes one step further by ranking accessible pages higher in the result set.

This approach has a two-fold benefit. It assists people with vision impairment to find the most relevant, useful, comprehensive and accessible information as quickly as possible, while encouraging web developers to make their sites more accessible, if they wish to rank well.

The *Accessible Search* results are also likely to be preferred by people with other disabilities, as it is more likely that these web sites will be designed to be universally accessible.

In addition, Google *Accessible Search* is likely to appeal to an even broader audience, as it aims to deliver pages that are generally more usable.

### Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

**Rocco J. Claps**, Co-Chairman, Director, Department of Human Rights  
**Carol L. Adams**, Ph.D., Co-Chairman, Secretary, Department of Human Services  
**Paul J. Campbell**, Director, Department Central Management Services  
**Roy Dolgos**, Director, Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Chris Kolker**, Chairman, Civil Service Commission  
**Deborah Johnson-Small**, Employee Member, Department of Human Services  
**Michael Knepler**, Employee Member, Department of Agriculture  
**Elaine Lazell**, Employee Member, Department of Healthcare and Family Services  
**Debbie Primm**, Employee Member  
**Susan Allen**, Department of Human Rights  
**Andrew Barris**, Civil Service Commission  
**Marva Campbell-Pruitt**, Department of Human Services  
**Kathy Day**, Department of Agriculture  
**Gwen Diehl**, Department of Veterans Affairs  
**Katherine Gardner**, Department of Human Services  
**Patty Greene**, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission  
**Chris Griffin**, Department of Central Management Services  
**Tammy Hall**, Department of Financial and Professional Regulation  
**Margaret Harkness**, Council on Developmental Disabilities  
**Jack Kanady**, Division Of Specialized Care for Children  
**Benda Montgomery**, Department of Central Management Services  
**Karen Wordelmann**, Illinois Employment and Training Council

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Note: This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.