



Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Monthly Bulletin March 2008

VISION

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, in concurrence with the Colorado Department of Human Service vision, seeks to become the nation's leader in empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, families, and communities to become safe and independent.

MISSION

To promote the interests of our constituents and to work to ensure the quality of communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing living in the state of Colorado.

Cliff's Notes

It was heartening to watch the Commission and community (Department of Human Services included), grow together for I know how critical it was for the Commission to grow with the community. In my eight short months in the office, I have seen a growing partnership between us and how committed the community has been to us. Work done or volunteerism by several groups of people, including, but not limited to: Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Committee, Legal Auxiliary Services Program Advisory Committee, Mental Health Task Force and now with the new TV Media Access Committee (see below for information on the Committee) is a proof of how committed they are in making deaf and hard of hearing lives much more comfortable in our beautiful state.

I noted in the January 2008 Monthly Bulletin that we are invigorated everyday, but nothing motivates us to work hard every day to meet and exceed your expectations than when you embrace the Commission projects. Your involvement in these meaningful projects makes it easy for us to keep our commitment to you.

Thank you for your commitment to the projects we, together, carry. May we travel our journey together for as long as it takes.

Enjoy this month's Bulletin!

About Terry Sims, Treasurer of the Commission

Terry Sims, Treasurer, has been involved with the deaf and hard of hearing community since December of 1983, when his infant son, Matt, became deaf. The last 25 years have been some of the most challenging yet fulfilling times of his life as he strived to raise a deaf child. Sadly, Matt passed away last month, but Terry continues to bring a passion for the rights of all persons in Colorado to have adequate access to governmental services. His wife, Maggie, works for the Rocky Mountain Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center and keeps him abreast of new developments relative to rights afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act. He has been serving the Commission since its inception in 2000 and provided the Commission a solid balance in perception of any issue and a very warm, if not gentle, heart. Serving the Commissioners and staff members bags or cups of candies at every meeting is

one of many examples of his generosity. He will be sorely missed when he departed the Commission after two terms of service on July 1, 2008.

New Staff Interpreter, Tricia Frank

The Commission is delighted to welcome Tricia Frank, Staff Interpreter, aboard! We are fortunate to team up with an interpreter of her caliber and look forward to working with her while we embark on many exciting projects, both big and small, in the future.

Tricia Frank has been a certified interpreter since 1975, working as an interpreter all but two of those years. She wanted to learn sign language since her sister is deaf. Once she started learning the language and the culture, she knew she had found her future career as well. She is thrilled to be working at the Commission knowing that it is the “center” of working with important issues facing deaf and hard of hearing residents of Colorado. It is also known for the quality, hard working staff who have their hearts in the right place.

Tricia has a fierce love of animals and lives to support and protect them. Because of that fact, she became a vegetarian 23 years ago. Her most memorable and breathtaking trip was to the Galapagos Islands. It involved a tremendous amount of hiking followed by swimming, yet it was very relaxing. It was marvelous seeing animals so close up, living with no threat from humans.

Tricia finally met the man of her dreams just seven years ago. They are currently remodeling their home and have a list of projects long enough to last a good long time. They enjoy hiking and traveling with their dogs. They adopted Syd three and half years ago. He is deaf, is the sweetest dog ever and loves every human and dog he meets! They feel so lucky to have him in their lives. Sadie was adopted at age five less than a year ago. She has more energy than the rest of the family put together and has happily “shared her hearing with her brother”. He often watches her and follows her reactions to sounds. She is helpful in getting his attention when he’s in the far corner of the yard or house.

Legal Auxiliary Services Program

A free, introductory level workshop designated to provide prospective Deaf Interpreters with an overview of the role and function of an Interpreter, including ethical considerations will be provided to interested individuals from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday April 19, 2008, at Front Range Community College in Westminster. For more information, please contact Cheri Davis, Legal Auxiliary Services Program Manager, at 303-866-4734 (TTY/VP), 303-866-4824 (voice), or cheri.davis@state.co.us.

A six-day legal training for interpreters who are interested in becoming legally qualified interpreters in June 2008 is being planned and will be published shortly. Watch for our announcement.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

Again, the new Rule will become effective on April 1, 2008. The intent of the Rule revisions is to make the Program available to a larger deaf and hard of hearing community and to make the application process more efficient. This includes:

- 1) Income qualification for the Program: The applicant’s income must be less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines based on family size as indicated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines no longer applies.
- 2) Telecommunications equipment eligibility: The applicant may re-apply for new equipment if the applicant has received equipment from the Program within the preceding four (4) years. The current Rule has seven (7) years.

- 3) Applicant can submit a telecommunications bill, such as for a high-speed internet service, instead of the required "land-line" telephone (traditional) bill for proof of telecommunications service.
- 4) Vendor voucher reimbursement: This part was eliminated from the Rule because the voucher system is no longer needed for clients.

An announcement regarding available telecommunications equipment will be made shortly.

For more information, please contact TEDP at Marion Downs Hearing Center at:

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Aurora, CO 80045
720-2979 (TTY)
720-848-2970 (voice)
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mdhc@uch.edu
www.mariondownshearingcenter.org

TV Media Access Committee

At the invitation of David Dawson, Executive Director of Audio Information Network of Colorado, where the Radio Ready Services of the Rockies are operated, and James Morgese, President and General Manager of Rocky Mountain PBS, members of the Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and members of the community participated in an informal discussion on February 28, 2008. This meeting was prompted by the Federal Communication Commission mandated elimination of analog broadcast signals to the digital format, which is producing a new opportunity to develop options of delivering speech, dialog and narrative to the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

The discussion centered around the opportunity for new technology to be developed as the deadline of February 17, 2009 for full conversion to technology approaches. It was acknowledged that the deaf and hard of hearing populace could best define their "perfect media".

It was concluded that a project team would identify which methods of delivery of the programming and communication, such as captioning and American Sign Language, would be most suitable. Conclusions of the project team will assist KRMA-TV determine if their technology is suitable for the "perfect media" before funding can be sought.

Joyce Brubaker, Director of the Rocky Mountain Deaf News, was appointed by Chair Benedetto to chair the new sub-committee called TV Media Access Committee. This project team will begin its task of designating a vision for the station after it assembled the Committee. Updates will be made in the Commission Monthly Bulletins.

Access to Office via Videophone

Our firewall issue has been resolved and a videophone (VP) was installed! The Commission can now receive incoming videophone calls. Our VP number is: **303-866-4734**. It is the same as TTY number. Feel free to video-call us at anytime.

Deep gratitude goes to effort made by the Department of Information Technology for their firewall work and Sorenson's for installation of videophone!