



DBTAC Northwest

ADA Information Center

CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter for the Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center

Fall 2007

Our Mission

To provide Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington) with technical assistance for businesses and a comprehensive plan for ADA implementation that empowers persons with disabilities to improve their opportunities in: obtaining/retaining employment, access to private sector goods and services, ease of use of public and private transportation, and telecommunications.

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Breaking News in Our Region: Washington State Broadens the Definition of Disability

A Washington State Law Against Discrimination went into effect July 22, 2007, and is applicable to actions occurring prior to July 6, 2006, and all actions occurring after the effective date. The law redefines "disability" and "impairment." What does this mean for Washington?

The information provided explains these changes in full, and is reprinted with permission and thanks to the Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC).

GUIDE TO DISABILITY and WASHINGTON STATE NONDISCRIMINATION LAW (Reprinted from the Washington State Human Rights Commission)

In Washington State, there have been significant changes to disability law from July 2006 to July 2007. On July 6, 2006, in McClarty v. Totem Electric, 157 Wn.2d 214 (2006), the Supreme Court of the State of Washington, in a 5-4 ruling, adopted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition of disability. In doing so, the Court dispensed with its earlier decisions regarding the definition of disability, as well as with the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) regulation that had successfully served as the Washington State Human Rights Commission's (WSHRC) definition of disability since 1973.

In response to this decision, the Washington State Legislature enacted SB 5340 which effectively overturns the McClarty decision. This new statute, which was signed by Governor Gregoire, rejects the ADA definition of disability, returns the State to a broad definition of disability, and increases protections for persons with medical, psychological, and other impairments.

The definition of disability has changed, but other aspects of disability law remain the same. The reasonable accommodation process remains the same, protections against harassment have stayed in place, and undue hardship defenses for small businesses remain.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (excerpts from WSHRC)

What is the definition of disability in the state of Washington?

As of July 21, 2007, the definition of disability, found in RCW 49.60.040 is as follows:



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Washington Definition of Disability, *continued*

(25)(a) "Disability" means the presence of a sensory, mental, or physical impairment that:

- i) Is medically cognizable or diagnosable; or
- ii) Exists as a record or history; or
- iii) Is perceived to exist whether or not it exists in fact.

(b) A disability exists whether it is temporary or permanent, common or uncommon, mitigated or unmitigated, or whether or not it limits the ability to work generally or work at a particular job or whether or not it limits any other activity within the scope of this chapter.

(c) For purposes of this definition, "impairment" includes, but is not limited to:

- i) Any physiological disorder, or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organs, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or
- ii) Any mental, developmental, traumatic, or psychological disorder, including but not limited to cognitive limitation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Does this definition cover all uses of the word "disability," including services or benefits programs?

No, it only changes the definition for purposes of nondiscrimination.

How does this definition differ from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA or federal) definition?

The Washington State definition is broader and covers a greater number of impairments and medical, mental, or psychological conditions.

Temporary conditions are covered under the Washington State definition, but are not covered under the ADA. Conditions that are ameliorated or mitigated by medication or other means are disabilities under the Washington State definition, but are often not considered to be disabilities under the ADA. Under the Washington State definition, there is no requirement that a condition must have an impact on a major life activity, or that the impact of the condition be substantially limiting.

What characteristics are not disabilities?

Personality traits such as chronic tardiness or irritability are not in and of themselves disabilities (although they may be symptoms of disabilities). Physical traits such as being left handed or being short are not disabilities. (Though there are medical and genetic conditions that cause extreme short stature that are disabilities.) A normal pregnancy is not considered to be a disability, although pregnancy related medical conditions, such as gestational diabetes or hypertension, can sometimes be disabilities. Discrimination against a pregnant woman is prohibited under the Washington Law Against Discrimination as sex discrimination. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination are covered by other sections of the Washington Law Against Discrimination.

Is drug or alcohol addiction a disability?

The use of illegal drugs is not protected. However if someone is recovering from drug addiction, they are considered to have a disability. Alcoholics are considered to have a disability. Behavior standards in the workplace and elsewhere continue to apply; nondiscrimination law is not an excuse for violent, threatening, or improper behavior anywhere. Please request the WSHRC's Questions and Answers on drug and alcohol addiction issues for more information.



If you need additional information, please contact the WSHRC at 360-753-6770 or 800-233-3247 (TTY 800-300-7525). Additional information on this and other civil rights issues can be found at www.hum.wa.gov.

DBTAC *Northwest* is available to answer questions about these changes at 1-800-949-4232.

Para mas información en español por favor llamen a 1-800-478-2219.

What is the DBTAC Northwest?

The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) *Northwest* is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to provide information, materials, technical assistance, and training to help those with rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). DBTAC *Northwest* provides services to a variety of audiences including employers, businesses, state and local governments, schools, and individuals with disabilities. In addition, DBTAC *Northwest* provides information and training services that promote access to the community through the use of assistive technology, accessible information technology, and accessible design in transportation, recreation, and buildings.

Our challenge is providing these comprehensive services over a large four state geographical region including Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. In our planning efforts the decision was made to create individual state steering committees to provide guidance to their respective state and the region. The focus of these state steering committees is to address the unique culture within each state and also address the needs and concerns of the region collectively.

In this funding cycle, a focus of NIDRR for all of the DBTACs nationally is to identify strategies for improving employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Each grant submitted was required to include a research component to assist in the identification of intervention strategies that will benefit employers and individuals with disabilities. DBTAC *Northwest* has partnered with the University of Washington to conduct research on the hiring behavior of small and mid-size employers. The investigation will work closely with local rotary clubs to clarify the variables that affect hiring behavior as well as to develop intervention strategies. So stay tuned for reports on the outcomes of these research efforts in the next couple of years.

DBTAC *Northwest* has two overriding goals for this 5-year funding cycle. One is to position ourselves among the business community as a friend and resource in their ADA compliance efforts. The second major initiative is create a region wide peer support network of state and local government officials.

For Employers

For our employers we will have an online ADA toolkit, consisting of these items:

- sample reasonable accommodation request form
- sample protocol for conducting reasonable accommodation interviews
- checklist for a self assessment of architectural barriers
- free CD on "How to Conduct an Accessibility Survey"
- online training for managers and supervisors about the employment requirements of the ADA

For ADA Coordinators

For the ADA Coordinators in state and local government service we will have an online toolkit consisting of these items:

- sample ADA program audit tool
- sample reasonable accommodation form
- sample ADA complaint procedures
- sample reassignment procedures
- sample reasonable accommodation interview protocol
- checklist to determine architectural barriers
- bulletin board to post questions and react to ADA requirements

For more information, please call DBTAC *Northwest* at 1-800-949-4232 (Voice/ TTY) or visit our website at www.DBTACNorthwest.org.



Meet the Staff of DBTAC Northwest

*'Out of intense complexities intense simplicities emerge'.
- Winston Churchill*

Laws as comprehensive as the ADA depend largely on competent people to understand and interpret both the legal framework of federal law and each individual's unique question about its application. DBTAC *Northwest* has been fortunate to gather talented and widely experienced professionals to meet the challenge of providing accurate, concise, and "friendly" information. Let's meet them.

Don Brandon, Project Director. From Juneau, Alaska and most recently Alaska's State ADA Coordinator, Don brings more than 25 years of experience in disability rights, affirmative action, and ADA compliance. He's participated five times



in the 376-mile Fairbanks to Anchorage wheelchair race, and alternates driving his '57 Chevy and '55 Cadillac cars to work.

His association with disability rights predates the passage of the ADA in 1990. As the Alaska State

Director of Easter Seals and a member of the Governor's Committee on Disability, Brandon worked with and hosted legends like Justin Dart and Evan Kemp in their first attempt at national disability legislation in 1988. At that time he had been working at Easter Seals in Alaska on alternatives to the Jerry Lewis telethons to raise disability awareness and worked with members of the President's Committee on Disability.

Brandon worked his way through increasingly more responsible positions with the University of Alaska during the 1990's, starting as the ADA coordinator for the UA-Anchorage branch, in the Affirmative Action Office, then as the ADA Coordinator for the UA system, and finally Assistant Director of Personnel at the UA-Fairbanks branch. He already understood the civil rights issues, but responsibilities at UA taught him the legal side of disability rights.

In 1998 Brandon was hired as Alaska's State ADA Coordinator and takes great pride in having helped establish some of the nation's strongest state laws promoting access to state services and a process for

state departments to evaluate and correct poor practices. "No one who followed the State ADA complaint procedure ever prevailed in court and we were only sued once!" The State ADA task force under Brandon's direction created policy and procedures that promoted systemic change, created a positive climate, offered constant training and consultation, and removed barriers.

Iyataco McKee, Training and Information Specialist. Armed with a brand new Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Washington University and honored as "Outstanding Student of the Year," Iyataco and service dog Sandy are still adjusting to working at one job and going home *before* dinner. For the first time in seven years, Iyataco (and Sandy) are not in school.

Her specialty area is the ADAAG, or ADA Accessibility Guidelines that govern everything from new commercial construction to public facilities and state offices. She has performed accessibility surveys at a number of settings ranging from universities to private businesses. "I know that I am supposed to be doing this," she offers, "and I'm crystal clear about that."

Iyataco has a background working with people with disabilities in the arts and was previously employed with VSA Arts of Washington, a non-profit organization that promotes access to the arts for people of all abilities. Her work there created an interest in accessibility issues, and Iyataco pursued becoming an ADA accessibility specialist. "Helping businesses create accessible venues is very gratifying



because it has the potential to affect so many people," says Iyataco.

Iyataco and Sandy are outdoors whenever possible, visiting and camping in state parks across Washington. They moved to the Seattle area from Colorado ten years ago, and particularly enjoy the natural beauty of the Pacific NW. As an

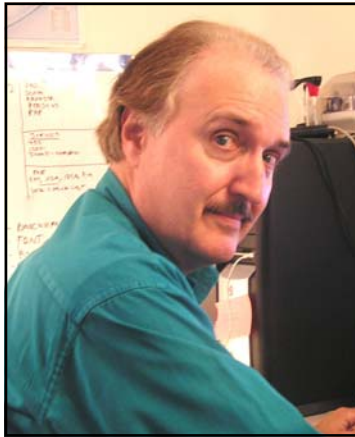
artist, Iyataco works in paint, clay and mixed media, and has participated in a number of juried art shows.

Meet the Staff of DBTAC Northwest, *continued*

Since questions about service animals are among the most frequent at the DBTAC, Iyataco's long history with Sandy has provided a depth of experience in dealing with issues as an owner, and her more recent experience dealing with ADA calls on service animals have allowed her to provide a knowledgeable and sympathetic ear. "Sandy really impacts my life as an individual with a disability. She does everything with me," says Iyataco.

Conrad Kuehn, Web Technology Specialist.

Those familiar with DBTAC Northwest's host organization, the Center for Continuing Education



in Rehabilitation (CCER) will recognize Kuehn as the go-to individual for all their computer, web, and media problems. He'll be providing support for the DBTAC's various distance learning activities as well as providing technical support for ADA questions dealing

with building architecture, accessibility, and human resource management.

Kuehn brings an amazingly diverse range of experience to the DBTAC. He's finishing his doctoral degree in Administration with a focus on the future of employment services for people with mental illnesses, teaching classes on educational finance, developing an expertise in instructional design, and keeping the computers and website functioning. He's worked in private rehabilitation with Worker's Compensation, helped start a company to provide businesses with on-line personal retention services, and holds a Master's degree from Antioch University in Psychology/Human Resource Development.

"I'm a lifelong learner," Kuehn reports, "and I enjoy taking on new projects."

In previous times, Kuehn worked as the building engineer and later property manager for multiple office buildings in Seattle, including the 77-story Columbia Center. Earlier he was in the hotel industry, serving as an internal auditor, food and beverage manager, and general manager. He tended bar in Helena, Montana and taught high school social service classes in Pennsylvania. And yes, he was once a steelworker in Philadelphia.

Jo Fleming, Project Manager Washington State.

From Lexington, Kentucky, Fleming brings a deep and rich background that combines assistive technology, classroom instruction and multimedia curriculum development. She holds a PhD in Special Education from the University of Washington, and is delighted to return to the Seattle area.

With husband Barney, "Dr. Jo" ran ORCCA Technology, a small company that initially produced accessible products like a big button TV control and plastic key guards for computer keyboards. As the company grew Fleming began writing and producing multimedia instructional products -- the first a CD for professionals that described assistive technology. Supported by grants from the National Institute of Health, ORCCA produced widely varying professional development multimedia products, ranging from one for speech pathologists dealing with swallowing disorders to one for dentists on the medical management of dental patients. One of these products, aimed at medical students learning about the central nervous system, will be paired with a soon-to-be published book by Lippincott. In addition, she was on the faculty in the Special Education Department at the University of Kentucky.

Fleming is one of those individuals who is a quick adopter of new technology, and finds a lot of pleasure in the puzzle-solving aspect of making technology work for whatever challenges arise. For most of the last 37 years she has designed her own work through writing grants. "When I didn't know what was next, I wrote a grant," Fleming notes. She owned one of the first Macintosh computers and helped a middle school become an Apple Partner in Education.

She's taught graduate classes at Louisiana State University and the University of Kentucky, taught math and technology courses in middle school, worked extensively with teachers as they integrated



students with disabilities into their classroom, completed post-doctoral training in instructional and assistive technology, and produced training materials on a diverse variety of topics. Coming to the DBTAC, Fleming hopes to focus on a more contained set of disability topics and find time to enjoy life through camping and hiking.



Recent Court Case Review from the DBTAC *Inquisitor*

Huber v. Wal-Mart. Reading court cases about the ADA can be very confusing. Deciding which court case is the appropriate one is even more confusing. Is it the decision from the Circuit Court, the Appellate Court, which Circuit, which Circuit with different decisions about the same thing? One District Court can say one thing and another will say something contradictory. A third one may be somewhere in between. This bewildering matrix occurred to me when I was reading Huber v. Wal-Mart.

This 2007 case was about an injured employee (Huber) who was reassigned to another job after her injury stabilized. This entailed a substantial cut in pay. Huber wanted a router's job which would have paid a comparable salary. She was qualified for the position. Company policy is to promote the highest qualified employee. Huber did not get the position and was assigned to a lower paying job. Huber sued, saying that she should have been given the job because she was qualified, which she was.

Here was the confusion. The Tenth Circuit Court stated that "reassignment obligation must mean something more than merely allowing a disabled person to compete equally with the rest of the world for a vacant position" (Smith v. Midland Brake, Inc. (1999)). The Seventh Circuit Court, however, stated that the company can assign "the worker to a different job in which his disability will not be an impediment to full performance, and if the reassignment is feasible and does not require the employer to turn away a superior applicant, the reassignment is mandatory" (EEOC v. Humiston-Keeling, Inc., (2000)).

Huber's representatives wanted the Tenth Circuit decision to be used as the precedent and Wal-Mart wanted the Seventh Circuit decision as the precedent. Both of these decisions were at least seven years old. The Court decided that other decisions such as Turco v. Hoechst Celanese Corp. (5th Cir. 1996), stated that the ADA does not require affirmative action, only equal opportunity. Thus they decided for Wal-Mart. This then becomes a precedent for that Circuit Court only. It can be used voluntarily in other circuits when a legal proceeding calls for that type of decision.

An example of this precedent making confusion is Gambini v. Total Renal Care, Inc., (9th Cir., 2007) which ties in Washington State's wide interpretation of disability and protection with the ADA and protected negative behavior in the workplace as part of a disability. This is a big change in the scope of the definition and conflicts with other decisions. It is contained to the Ninth Circuit but could be used as a precedent in other Circuits.

Court cases leave many questions up in the air and often create paradox. First one should know what Circuit Court they are in and remember that the fine tuning of the court cases occurs there, not across the country in another Circuit. Second, has the case been appealed, and lastly, is there cross-circuit agreement on decisions? Or, don't read the cases and stick to the scope of the original legislation. It sure feels better.

Gambini v. Total Renal Care (Davita), Inc. This case in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has sent some waves of concern to the business community. Its relevance boils down to the inclusion of behavior under the protection of a disability.

Stephanie Gambini was trying to manage the symptoms of her Bipolar Disorder. She sought an accommodation at work and then a leave of absence to accomplish this. While Gambini was working with a doctor to find the right medicine, her productivity and social skills suffered. In a confrontation with her supervisor about her poor performance, Gambini acted out verbally and threw some objects. She was preliminarily granted FMLA leave and her behavior was investigated. When she returned she was terminated due to her behavior and the unease of some of her fellow employees.

She sued in local court and Davita won the court case. Gambini appealed to the 9th Circuit (WA, OR, AK, ID, AZ, CA, MT, NV, Guam, and the Marianas) stating that there were faults in the jury instructions. The main instruction of interest referred to the combination of disability and behavior in the definition of protection. Gambini submitted the following instruction and the original trial court denied its inclusion. Instr. 26: "Conduct resulting from a disability is part of the disability and not a separate basis for termination" (p. 4511).

The Appeals court concurred with Gambini that this should not be excluded. This case was appealed under Washington Law and unlike the ADA, this law contains no direct threat application. Gambini used the Washington case of *Riehl v. Foodmaker, Inc. (2004)* as the precedent for including behavior in the definition of protection. Riehl drew on *Humphrey v. Memorial Hospitals Ass'n, (2001)*, quoting the ADA that “conduct resulting from a disability is considered part of the disability, rather than a separate basis for termination.” They reiterated that the law sometimes carries more protection to people with disabilities than the general population.

The court did not look at direct threat because this is not a consideration under Washington law and it was not requested by Davita. This avoided a direct Washington law-ADA controversy. The court, in its decision, said that it is still possible to raise a “business necessity” or “direct threat” or “undue burden” defense against the discrimination claim. However, the employee’s conduct should have been addressed under the reasonable accommodation negotiations (p. 4516).

This case goes back to the jury for further work but the ruling is relatively clear only in the Washington case with ramifications to the Ninth Circuit. Behavior caused by and concomitant to the disability can be covered as part of the disability that is protected by the ADA. Discipline for this behavior must be made under the auspices of the ADA, most likely within a reasonable accommodation. Other issues that the jury should consider are undue burden, direct threat and business necessity.

DBTAC Staff, continued from page 5

Kaleb Cameron, Graduate Research Assistant.

Having just completed his MA in Rehabilitation Counseling at Western Washington University, Cameron is providing support for the DBTAC Northwest and teaching classes for students with developmental disabilities at Edmonds Community College. One of his first projects for the DBTAC was to update and revise a brochure on accessible parking for Washington State, which involved collaboration with the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment and the State Department of Transportation.



While Cameron has attended school continually, he has also worked for a community protection program that provides supervision and support for adults with developmental disabilities. In addition, he spent four summers working for a rec/ed program for children, providing his first professional exposure to children with significant disabilities.

“I want to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in education and employment, so they can live as productive and healthy members of society,” says Cameron. “I have really enjoyed working with students with disabilities and hope to provide disability services in an educational setting.” Teaching along with an abiding interest in working with people with disabilities, comes through as Cameron’s passions.



Looking for Answers to your Parking Questions?

A new accessible parking brochure for Washington State will soon be available upon request. The DBTAC *Northwest* has been working collaboratively with the State Department of Transportation and the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment to create an updated and revised brochure. This publication will educate people seeking to obtain, provide, and better understand accessible parking. To request an accessible parking brochure for Washington State, please call our toll-free number at 1-800-949-4232.

Quick Q & A

Providing examples of technical assistance calls ...

A store owner asks: "On more than one occasion, patrons have come into my grocery store with well-behaved service animals that were focused on working and tasks that they are trained to do. However, recently when a woman came in with a service dog, another patron began to pet and play with the animal. How can I address this issue if it happens again? "

Here is what you could advise the patron who wants to pet the dog: "When there is a service dog present, it is best to ignore it. Service animals should not be distracted while working. While this may sound rude to tell you not to interact with the dog, consider that the animal is working and needs to focus and concentrate. It is difficult for the most highly trained animal to focus when it is being lavished with attention. You can direct your comments and questions to the person, but please don't ask personal questions about the need for a service

animal. Most people are not comfortable talking in-depth about medical issues with strangers."

Additional Information: The handler may take the animal off work (take a break) and allow someone from the public to pet them. This should be done at the owner's discretion. In the case presented, it could be suggested that the individuals go outside to interact with the dog while the dog is taking a break. When the dog and handler are back on task they can re-enter the establishment and complete their shopping.

Service Animal Resources

www.psychdog.org
www.ada.gov/animal.htm
www.jan.wvu.edu/media/servanim.html
www.deltasociety.org/download/facts_about_sd_2003.pdf

Service Animal Tips

Service animals are individually trained to assist people who have disabilities. Examples of tasks for which service animals can be trained include (not an exclusive list):

- Pull a wheelchair
- Guide an individual with a vision impairment
- Detect low-blood sugar levels
- Retrieve medication
- Alert other people when an individual with a disability needs assistance
- Assist with falls and transfers
- Assist with daily routines and schedules
- Activate a button to contact emergency assistance
- Brace an individual for balance and walking



Service Animals

Entities that serve the public are obligated to allow access of service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Service animal handlers are not required to carry proof of certification or other documentation.

1-800-949-4232
www.dbtacnorthwest.org

Under the ADA, service animals are individually trained to provide assistance (tasks) to people with disabilities.

- Yes, you *can* ask a handler, "What tasks has the animal been trained to do?"
- Yes, you *can* ask, "Do you have a disability?"
- No, you *cannot* ask, "What is your disability?"

This wallet-size card is available by calling 1-800-949-4232.



Upcoming Events & Trainings

September

- *Beyond Disabilities 2007 Regional Conference - Tri-Cities, WA - September 13-14*
- *Job Placement and Support for People with Psychiatric Disabilities - Idaho Falls, ID - Sept 26-27*

October

- *Northwest Regional Education Forum - Seattle, WA - October 1-2*
- *National Certificate in Employment Services, Part 1 - Portland, OR - October 9-11*
- *Idaho Partnerships Conference - Boise, ID - October 17-20*
- *NW Conference on Professional Development in Disability Services - Eugene, OR - October 24-26*
- *Idaho VR In-Service - Boise, ID - October 23-25*

November

- *What's New Now? Region X ADA Symposium, Portland, OR - November 6-7*
- *National Certificate in Employment Services, Part II - Seattle, WA - November 14-16*

What's New Now: Region X ADA Symposium

- Explore cutting edge ADA issues!
- Designed to bring together the community of employers, facility designers, and people with disabilities to learn with and from each other about the ever changing needs in the journey towards compliance
- With special guest John Kemp, Executive Director and General Counsel of the US Business Leadership Network

November 6 & 7, 2007, Doubletree Hotel, Lloyd Center, Portland, Oregon

*For further information, visit our website at
www.DBTACNorthwest.org or phone Tammi Olson
at 1-888-377-0100 or TTY 1-425-771-7438*

For more information about any of these sessions, contact
DBTAC Northwest at 1-800-949-4232 or
CCER at 1-888-377-0100

Visit the DBTAC *Northwest* website to register for the *Region X ADA Symposium*. Check frequently for announcements of upcoming events and training opportunities.
www.DBTACNorthwest.org



Here's What's Happening with Our Affiliates in Oregon, Alaska, Idaho and Washington ...



Since October 2006, the Oregon ADA Center, located at the University of Oregon in Eugene, has been providing technical assistance, training, information, referrals, and dissemination of materials on all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Center has reached out to Oregonians via public awareness events and targeted trainings with current information on the ADA to people with disabilities, businesses, and professionals. The Center has focused on establishing a state-wide presence and building local and state capacity by developing training partnerships with a variety of other ADA experts throughout the state. Led by

Andrea Cioffi, the Oregon ADA Center continues to assist people with technical assistance calls via the DBTAC Northwest line on 1-800-949-4232.

Recently DBTAC Northwest participated in the Oregon In-Service for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Salem. DBTAC staff members Jo Fleming and Terri Smith presented training sessions on the interactive reasonable accommodation process of the Americans with Disabilities Act, with examples of rehabilitation technology. This provided an opportunity for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to learn about accommodation ideas and the many resources DBTAC *Northwest* can offer counselors, job developers, employees and employers in this process.

The Oregon ADA Center, like all DBTAC affiliates in the Northwest Region, is putting together a state steering committee. If you are interested in participating in the DBTAC's efforts in Oregon, please phone our hotline or email Don Brandon at don.brandon@wwu.edu. Another exciting change in Oregon in the next year will be an increase in resources for training and technical assistance. Stay tuned!



David Barton is the DBTAC *Northwest* affiliate in Alaska, working through Access Alaska. He has many years of experience in the field, and is seeking to put together a steering committee of vested parties who share the goal of increasing employment for individuals with disabilities in Alaska. If interested, please call David on 1-888-462-1444.

One of the many things David was busy with this past year was the ADA Partners Project, which has built a coalition of organizations in Alaska that support people with disabilities. These organizations encourage independence and opportunity for Alaskans with disabilities by assisting them to live in the community of their choice. This August

they joined together to celebrate and commemorate the 17th Anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

On Monday, August 6th, Access Alaska held a night of Alaskan experiences, including a silent auction, with proceeds going directly to benefit people with disabilities around the state and assist to offset celebration costs. Entertainment included the Alaska Native Dancers and the entertaining speaker, Ryan Knighton. National speaker and the star of the best-seller book *Cockeyed*, Ryan Knighton, traveled to Anchorage to share his message of success. Ryan's story is one that engages both the hearts and the minds of his listeners, allowing us to laugh at the seeming frailty and unpredictability of the human condition, while at the same time offering a message of hope and courage.

For information on future events in Alaska, check in at www.adapartners.org.



Bobby Ball, Executive Director, and Tiffany Southwick, Coordinator of the Idaho Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act Inc have been busy! In the past year they have worked hard to increase the understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act and related legislation in Idaho.

One example of exciting developments in Idaho includes the Idaho Department of Labor funding of the Disability Navigator program to assist individuals with disabilities throughout the state access employment through workforce system services. Idaho has just received this two year grant. Disability Program Navigators will offer hands-on, one-on-one counseling to assist workers with disabilities in accessing the employment opportunities and services available through the public workforce investment system. The navigators received ADA training by the ADA Task Force and the Idaho Human Rights Commission in August.

In addition, the Idaho State Capitol Building is undergoing a three year renovation, so offices have been temporarily moved to two historic buildings. The Governor's office requested site reviews to identify barriers and make recommendations on how to remove them in these historic buildings. The Idaho Task Force is excited about being part of efforts to increase accessibility in their State Capitol.

To further the goals of the Idaho Task Force, a statewide steering committee to increase the low employment rate of people with disabilities has been established and had its first meeting in May. The committee identified barriers to employment of persons with disabilities. If you are interested in the outcome of the steering committee meeting, please call 208-344-5590. The ADA Task Force continues to recruit board members, so if our mission interests you please call us or visit the web site www.adataskforce.org.



The affiliate for the state of Washington is Jo Fleming, who works out of the central DBTAC office in Mountlake Terrace. Jo has been with the DBTAC for only a few months, but has already formed a diverse and solid base of steering committee members. The Washington State Steering Committee members will be introduced in the next newsletter along with progress made towards identifying audiences and topics for training and technical assistance.

Even though the Steering Committee met for the first time on September 5, it's not too late to become a Steering Committee member or provide a suggestion for someone who could contribute to this committee. Please contact us by email, jo.fleming@wwu.edu, or phone (800-949-4232) if you would like more information about committee membership. Now is a great time to help make a difference in Washington.

In this past year, DBTAC staff have provided architectural and reasonable accommodation surveys, as well as presented trainings in Seattle on employment rights under Title I of the ADA, and in Vancouver on child care centers and the ADA. Various products have been created and are available upon request. These include a brochure on accessible parking, a wallet-sized card about service animals, and a reasonable accommodation documentation form for rehabilitation counselors. A training curriculum is being created covering all Titles of the ADA. The DBTAC website is in the process of being updated and will soon contain exciting opportunities for training and dissemination of information, such as the ADA Coordinator's Toolkit and the Employer's Toolkit, along with online training modules.

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DBTAC *Northwest*
ADA Information Center
6912 220th Street SW, Suite 105
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043
Toll-free: 800.949.4232
TTY: 425.771.7438
www.DBTACNorthwest.org