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HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

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TDC offers ideas...hope

You drive to work, walk into your office, turn on the light, adjust the thermostat, sit in the chair at your desk, and make a quick phone call during which you jot down some notes, switch on your computer and begin entering information.

Sound like a fairly effortless and routine experience? Not for everyone.

People with disabilities may find some or all of those day-to-day physical activities very difficult, if not impossible, unless they have assistance.

The Technology Demonstration Center (TDC), located in the Thomas E. Ringer Jr. Building at the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department complex in West Columbia, helps persons facing those barriers to learn ways of removing them.

Adaptive aids and devices help these individuals independently reach their goals in school, on the job, at home, and in recreation.



TDC visitors see, learn about and try out the latest in commercially available products.

"Hopefully, with the implementation of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), we'll be seeing more employers looking for aids and devices to help people with disabilities be competitively productive in the work force," said Linda D. Lake, technology specialist for the Center for Rehabilitation Technology Services, which operates the TDC.

The TDC does not sell any of the products. It serves as a research and demonstration center designed to keep up with rapidly changing technology.

While visiting the SCVRD's West Columbia campus Senator Strom Thurmond tries out a device which gives paraplegics and some quadriplegics the ability to stand. This ability increases circulation by putting the individual in a standing position and it also gives the individual a much broader range of motion with the ability to reach higher.

Senator Thurmond authored the legislation that authorized the funding for the Technology Demonstration Center.

photograph by Peter B. Howell

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Area offices:

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Technology, continued

The center is divided into nine demonstration areas: aids for daily living, communications, computer access, education, environmental control, fabrication, mobility, office and recreation.

Some devices are extremely helpful despite their simplicity. For instance, a touch tone telephone with oversized buttons makes dialing easier for persons with limited dexterity or low vision.

Other environmental control products operate several electrical objects at a time. With the help of a scanning device, the user can turn on a lamp, fan, television, stereo and other appliances.

Technological marvels abound at the center.

One device offers persons without the use of their legs the ability to rise to a standing position and move while standing. By elevating its rider this device provides better access to work areas that require a person to stand or sit at a high level.

Persons with speech and hearing impairments can try out portable devices they can program to speak or write for them. Many of these items feature keyguard overlays for persons with limited hand use.

A sip and puff device makes any conventional book accessible by turning pages — both forward and backward.

Many products are computer-oriented, including some educational programs aimed at youngsters. The center demonstrates several different ways of operating computers, depending on the disability of the user.

A production/work bench area features adapted hand tools, grips and vises, transport aids, test equipment and adjustable tables.

And, the center does not overlook the importance of recreation for both youngsters and adults. The "fun" products include bicycles propelled by the arms, a motorcycle that is street legal, and dolls that have disabilities.

The TDC is funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council and, of course, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

In addition, many manufacturers and vendors have loaned or donated equipment to the center.

The TDC is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. However, please telephone first for an appointment.

For more information, contact the Center for Rehabilitation Technology Services at (803) 822-5362 (voice or TDD).



Passage of the ADA brings celebration, dedication, prayer

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department celebrated two things recently at the department's campus on Boston Avenue in West Columbia.

The first was physical — the dedication of the newly completed Center for Comprehensive Programs where the department provides comprehensive vocational services designed to get people with disabilities on the road to employment — the culmination of a 10-year, long-range building plan.

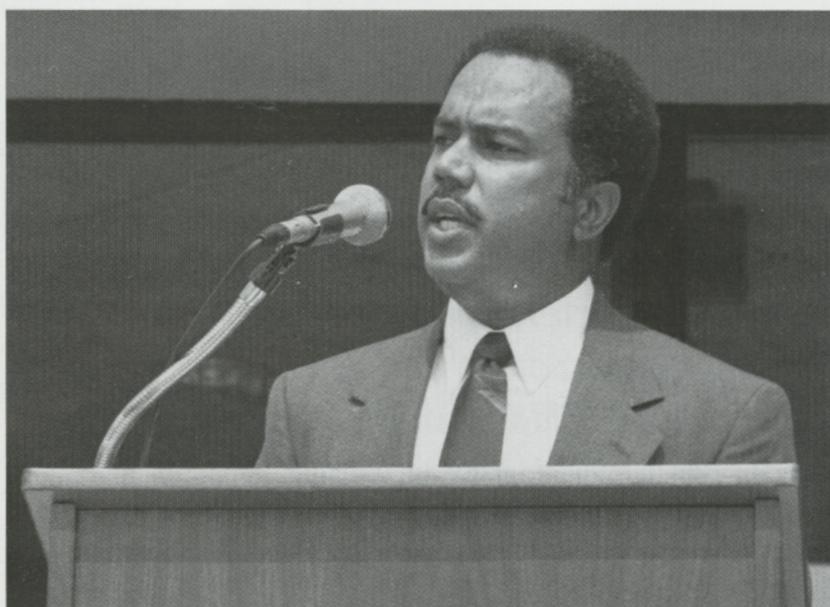
Here a team of rehabilitation specialists administers thorough evaluations and provides services such as physical therapy, psychological services, rehabilitation engineering services, adaptive aquatics, pain management, and independent living services.

The department can now provide services to individuals with severe disabilities in a campus setting.

The second was the new law that gave people with disabilities the basic civil rights that they deserve and that they need in order to lead independent lives — the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, signed into law by President Bush on July 26, 1990, gives the 43 million Americans with disabilities equal opportunity in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and

"...(The ADA will) enable people to help themselves and to be part of the mainstream of society and, of course, to become fully integrated into our communities. ..."



W. Lee Catoe
Executive assistant to the governor

telecommunications. (Articles detailing the ADA appear later in this issue of *NEW HORIZONS*.)

The 282nd United States Army Band from Fort Jackson provided music for the guests' enjoyment.

Tamara Bibb, regional commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration; Lee Catoe, executive assistant for Health and Human Services to Governor

Carroll Campbell; Louis D. Enoff, deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration; and Gordon Sherman, regional commissioner of the Social Security Administration, participated in the celebration.

Tours of the campus began at 9:30 a.m. and dedication ceremonies began at 11.



The Americans with Disabilities Act



"... We, as the federal partner, have long recognized South Carolina as being a national leader in the provision of rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and certainly this is just continued demonstration of that leadership throughout the country. ..."

Tamara Bibb
regional commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees basic civil rights for the 43 million Americans with disabilities — rights such as those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin and religion.

The law defines a person with a disability as anyone who has a mental or physical impairment that limits a major life function.

The ADA will protect people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The legislation forbids employers to discriminate against people with disabilities when hiring and promoting.

Businesses with between 15 and 24 employees have four years to meet the employment provisions. Those with 25 or more employees have a two-year exemption.

All businesses, offices, stores, restaurants and other public buildings will make their services available to people with disabilities within 18 months.

All new buses and public rail system vehicles will provide wheelchair accessibility.

State and local governments may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. All government facilities, services and communications will provide accessibility.

Telephone companies will make communications systems accessible to people with speech and hearing impairments.

Disability leaders spent many years laying the groundwork for this far-reaching legislation.





The message to the right of this photograph appears on the monument pictured here. The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department recently erected this monument and considers it to be the focal point of its West Columbia campus.

This monument is dedicated to those individuals with disabilities who through equality of opportunity have reached independence, productivity, and dignity in life and to the Vocational Rehabilitation Department employees who, by their outstanding commitment, have provided vocational guidance, encouragement and support.

This monument is donated by friends of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department who believe that persons with disabilities have an absolute right and responsibility to participate fully in society.

Recapping the ADA

Employment

-  Employers may not discriminate against an individual with a disability in hiring or promotion if the person is otherwise qualified for the job.
-  Employers can ask about one's ability to perform a job, but cannot inquire if someone has a disability or subject a person to tests that tend to screen out people with disabilities.
-  Employers will need to provide "reasonable accommodation" to individuals with disabilities. This includes steps such as job restructuring and modification of equipment.
-  Employers do not need to provide accommodations that impose an "undue hardship" on operations.

Who needs to comply:

-  All employers with 25 or more employees must comply, effective July 26, 1992.
-  All employers with 15–24 employees must comply, effective July 26, 1994.

Public accommodations

-  Private entities such as restaurants, hotels, and retail stores may not discriminate against individuals with disabilities, effective January 26, 1992.
-  Auxiliary aids and services must be provided to individuals with vision or hearing impairments or other individuals with disabilities, unless an undue burden would result.
-  Physical barriers in existing facilities must be removed, if removal is readily achievable. If not, alternative methods of providing the services must be offered, if they are readily achievable.
-  All new construction and alterations of facilities must be accessible.

State and local government

-  State and local governments may not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.
-  All government facilities, services, and communications must be accessible, consistent with the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Telecommunications

-  Companies offering telephone service to the general public must offer telephone relay services to individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDDs) or similar devices.

Transportation

-  Public transit buses ordered after August 26, 1990, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
-  Transit authorities must provide comparable paratransit or other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities who cannot use fixed route bus services, unless an undue burden would result.
-  Existing rail systems must have one accessible car per train by July 26, 1995.
-  New rail cars ordered after August 26, 1990, must be accessible.
-  New bus and train stations must be accessible.
-  Key stations in rapid, light and commuter rail systems must be made accessible by July 26, 1993, with extensions up to 20 years for commuter rail (30 years for rapid and light rail).
-  All existing Amtrak stations must be accessible by July 26, 2010.

Note: This information comes from material put out by the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

Greenville/VR Training Center unite

The Greenville Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center and the City of Greenville combined resources recently to implement a records management system for the city.

How did it come about?

Well, in 1989 the City of Greenville hired a records management consultant to study the physical condition of the vital records and the ways that these records were stored by the municipal court, city clerk's office, accounts payable, building and zoning, purchasing, and the tax office.

The consultant found the city's historical records stored in the basement of the old city jail next to the Broad Street Fire Department — exposed to dampness,

insects, etc.

None of the records were safe from fire.

None had been duplicated on microfilm.

The consultant recommended a long-term, city-wide records management program that complied with state standardization guidelines and included the following:

- an ongoing microfilming/indexing system for active records created in the user's own departments
- microfilm processing/duplicating/distributing by center records
- consistency
- clearing up the backlog by microfilming all existing historical documents

- an accountability system for records held by outside agencies
- the establishment of a base charge for copies of documents

The consultant estimated that it would take about \$300,000 over six years. This \$300,000 would purchase computers, software, and microfilm equipment and materials. It would also allow the city to hire a service bureau to help film the document backlog.

Instead, after working together to come up with a creative and cost-effective solution, the City of Greenville contracted with the Greenville Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center to do the work.



One of the Greenville Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center's clients checks microfilm before storing.

Greenville/VR, continued

The city purchased used microfilm equipment and loaned it to the center. They provided the labor to enclose a portion of the center for the microfilming and they helped the center train the members of their staff.

In addition, the city continues to provide all supplies, prepare the documents on the front end for microfilming, deliver the boxes of prepared documents to the center, repair the equipment as needed and provide quality control checks.

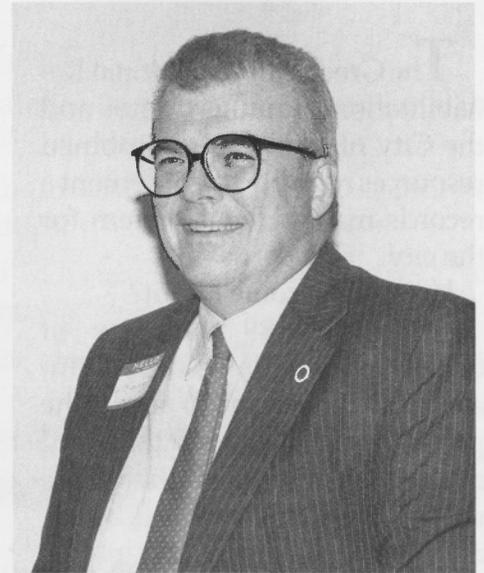
In exchange, the Vocational Rehabilitation Department provided the materials used to build

the room. It also recruits, trains and supervises workers with disabilities as microfilm operators and provides the microfilming at one-half to one-third the price that a conventional service bureau would charge.

The result?

The city saves money. (For instance, the department pays the workers based on production and adds no full-time employees.)

And, together, the city and the Vocational Rehabilitation Department provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



W. D. "Bill" Workman III, mayor of Greenville, greets guests at an open house showcasing the city's microfilming contract with the Greenville Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center.

**South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department
1410 Boston Avenue
Post Office Box 15
West Columbia, SC 29171-0015**

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