



WORLD

Technology News and Commentary for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People



CHANGING OF THE GUARD

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"TDI provides leadership in achieving equal access to telecommunications, media, and information technologies for deaf and hard of hearing people."

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Shaping An Accessible World

Board Views



**SHEILA
CONLON-MENTKOWSKI**

*TDI President and
Board Member, West Region*

“At the present time, there appear to be over 125 deaf attorneys who are deaf and hard of hearing in the USA.”



NAD Attorneys from Left to Right: Debra Patkin, Anna Bittencourt, Zainab Alkebsi, Caroline Jackson, Marc P. Charnatz, and Howard Rosenblum.

Increasing Number of Deaf Attorneys in the World

Seeing the recent news about the thirteen deaf lawyers admitted to the US Supreme Court was a big thrill. It made me reflect on when I first started to be interested in becoming a lawyer, back in the previous century. How I became a lawyer was mainly due to two

factors: my dad was a lawyer with a solo practice and the National Center for Law and the Deaf. It was fascinating to listen to Dad's stories representing a variety of clients, from juvenile delinquents, to immigrants seeking to become

Continued on page 3

BOARD VIEWS Continued from page 2

American citizens, among other types of cases. I wasn't sure if I could become a lawyer though as I hadn't seen or heard of other lawyers who were deaf except maybe lawyers losing their hearing. In comes the National Center for Law and the Deaf (NCLD) which was at the time located on the Gallaudet University campus. NCLD held a couple of workshops called Law Student Orientation Workshop (LSOW) where deaf people like myself would attend and learn what was involved in applying to and attending law school. I attended one of these along with several other deaf participants. We were able to meet Bob Mather, a deaf attorney, who is still working these days at the US Department of Justice. We were also told of Lowell Myers from Chicago, another deaf attorney and it seemed there were only those two deaf attorneys at the time. Jack Gannon's book, *Deaf Heritage*, does list other attorneys

from even farther back in the past.

When I attended Georgetown University Law School, it was a struggle finding interpreters for classes. CART was not available then. I was able to borrow notes and copy them from classmates so those helped to complement all the reading we had to do for each course. Upon finishing law school, I became a Staff Attorney for the NCLD and worked there for 8 years. I enjoyed the experience as I was able to assist clients in the law clinic with a variety of legal issues, write articles on topics of interest to deaf and hard of hearing, and do workshops all over the USA.

At the present time there appear to be over 125 attorneys who are deaf and hard of hearing in the USA. This number comes from a closed Deaf Lawyer group on Facebook. There are also deaf attorneys in Canada, the UK, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, and Australia that I am aware of.

Where do the current crop of attorneys work? The National Association of the Deaf employs 7 attorneys, 5 of whom are deaf, including its CEO,

Howard Rosenblum. Three work in academia: Bobbi Cordano, the President of Gallaudet University; Michael Schwartz, a law professor at Syracuse University in New York; and Bernard Hurwitz, Executive Assistant to the President of NTID at RIT. Some deaf attorneys work as corporate counsel for the video relay companies. Others work for the government at various levels, federal, state, and local. I am aware of a few who have or had private law practices. Some work for law firms. In Europe, at least two are members of the European Parliament, Helga Stevens from Belgium and Adam Kosa from Hungary. In the USA, there is now a deaf-blind attorney, Haben Girma, a Harvard Law school graduate, who is a major advocate for disability access.

It is a pleasure and source of great pride to see all these deaf attorneys coming up behind me and working in various fields. I hope to see more to come in future years.

All for access,

Sheila Conlon-Mentkowski, President

Board Member, West Region

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Capitol Commentary



BY CLAUDE STOUT
TDI Executive Director

“Public policy begins with any one of us consumers. It doesn’t begin inside the Beltway around Washington, D.C.”

Getting Involved in the Political Process Between Now and November 8

Be Sure to Register with Your Election Precinct Within 4 to 6 Weeks before the Election

This year we have had an interesting experience observing how the primaries played out in both the Republican and Democratic presidential nominating processes. Donald Trump, a real estate mogul, is the Republican nominee for U.S. President. And the Democrats have arrived at their historical choice, Hillary Rodham Clinton, a former Secretary of State, who if elected, would be the first female U.S. President in American history.

Rest assured, I am not writing this article to tell you whom to vote for as our next president of the United States. I challenge you all (myself included) to not only consider each party’s platform and make a choice for America’s future, but also to learn the views of candidates of both parties from ongoing news coverage as the political campaigns heat up throughout America until Election Day on November 8. The presidential candidates will attempt to cover key issues such as the state of the U.S. economy, foreign relations, immigration, trade, race relations, education, and infrastructure, etc. to win votes from the American electorate.

As to be expected from previous elections, disability access will not be an issue under their radar on a regular basis. I encourage you to make efforts to attend events that are organized by both presidential campaigns in your own communities. Make sure you let them know of your accessibility needs (sign language interpreting or real

time captioning) at the events. Listen to what the presidential candidate(s) say on different issues. If there is an opportunity to ask questions, raise your hand, and make a comment as a concerned U.S. citizen. Let them know your name and city of residence first, and that you are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, deaf-blind, or deaf and have a mobility disability, and then encourage them to address their stance on disability access and their plans to improve the standards of living for people with disabilities during their presidency. Let them know that people with disabilities (including those who are deaf and hard of hearing) make up twenty percent of the American population. Or you can say one out of every five Americans has a disability.

Be sure to make yourself heard at campaign events. The candidates will appreciate your input, and the audience will learn some new things from you, too. Questions you can ask the presidential candidates are:

What are your plans to increase hiring of people with disabilities for employment in the Federal government, other public places, businesses, and corporations? At the same time, what are you doing about the educational systems that must prepare us adequately for the labor market, such as today, and ten years or twenty years from now?

What are your plans to ensure that students who are deaf and hard of hearing are getting accessible materials and communication support in local public schools? Very often, schools are not adequately providing sign language interpreters, caption writers,

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CAPITOL COMMENTARY Continued from page 4

or videos with captioning or audio description in both the classroom and on the Internet. If a school for the deaf (often a state-supported facility or a charter school) is the best option for a student, are the resources adequately provided there to generate the best possible learning environment for him or her?

There is some good discussion going on about the "Internet of Things." What will you as U.S. President do your part to ensure that the rest of federal government and the business community (Apple, Google, Microsoft, Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, and many others) are responding to our disability access needs as they consider developing and deploying self-driving cars, gaming systems, Virtual Reality, interactive kitchen appliances, and other products that may involve only audio commands/cues, thus not give us visual ones as an alternative?

Here below are the kind of comments you can make with the candidates or their campaign staff:

We fully support the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. We need to see this Act as fully complied with, and effectively enforced by businesses, schools, hospitals, local and state governments, and courts, etc. The FCC has made significant progress in

the last twenty years for relay services. However, we

expect the FCC to bring all forms of relay services (VRS, IP-CTS, IP-Relay, Speech-to-Speech, etc.) to the "state of the art" level. Only then, can we be able to participate fully in our phone conversations with our hearing families, friends, and co-workers.

Many of us commute to work by public transit. Very often, there are no visual monitors at the train stations, in the train cars, or on buses. Thus, others hear the information from the public address system, and plan accordingly. If we cannot hear or understand the audio information, we may be left stranded at the train station, and find out much later what was happening.

Emergency preparedness is important for all Americans. There are over 6,500 public safety answering points (or 9-1-1 centers) across the nation. We encourage that you make a special commitment as our next president to see that the federal government works with cities and towns to ensure that they have Next Generation 9-1-1 system operational in due time via voice, video and/or text to serve the emergency calling needs of all Americans, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Have you registered to vote in your local election precinct? It is important that you finish register a

good two weeks to a month before the November 8 election. Then make sure you don't forget to go to the local precinct on November 8, and vote for your candidate as U.S. President, and also for other political offices. If you register and vote, you are exercising your responsibility as a first-class American.

Public policy begins with any one of us consumers. It doesn't begin inside the Beltway around Washington, DC. The more we interact with the presidential candidates and their campaign staff across the nation in the next four weeks, the more it will help us achieve our policy goals in the future. They need to be aware of our needs and issues regarding disability access. The more frequent input they get from us, the more they will be conscious of and committed to take action on our needs. If we do our part well this year as an active, participating voter bloc, whoever wins the White House would hopefully be more committed to produce substantial progress for disability access as a major part of the national agenda.

Remember, do your part by a timeline as per your local election precinct to register to vote. Then return back to the precinct on November 8 to vote. Thank you, and your participation will make an important difference for our advocacy work in Washington, D.C.

Every  Vote Counts!
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November 8, 2016



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Tech Bytes



DON CULLEN

Welcome to our
Tech Bytes section!
This section is TDI's
opportunity to share
bite-sized chunks of
awesomely interesting
tech, apps, and services
that we think you'd love
to know about!

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People have always relied on mass transit to cross a large amount of distance quickly. In the past, it was beast-based convoys, ships, trains, buses, then airplanes. With globalization now the norm, we're seeing societies exploring other possible technologies for mass transit. One such technology, endorsed by Elon Musk, has been garnering considerable attention. This technology is called Hyperloop. While he does not own patents on the technology, nor is the originator of it. Robert H. Goddard (father of the space age) deserves the credit for inventing the vacuum train (vactrain)

concept which is surprisingly similar to the Hyperloop conception Musk has been advocating.

Why is this hyperloop technology so revolutionary? The simplest answer is that it's faster than a plane, and cheaper to travel on than a plane. That alone makes it quite noteworthy.

Hyperloop capsules would be able to move at an average of 760 miles per hour, far exceeding that of planes moving at 500 miles per hour, even exceeding that of USA high speed rail trains that move at an average of 200 miles per hour. Just imagine

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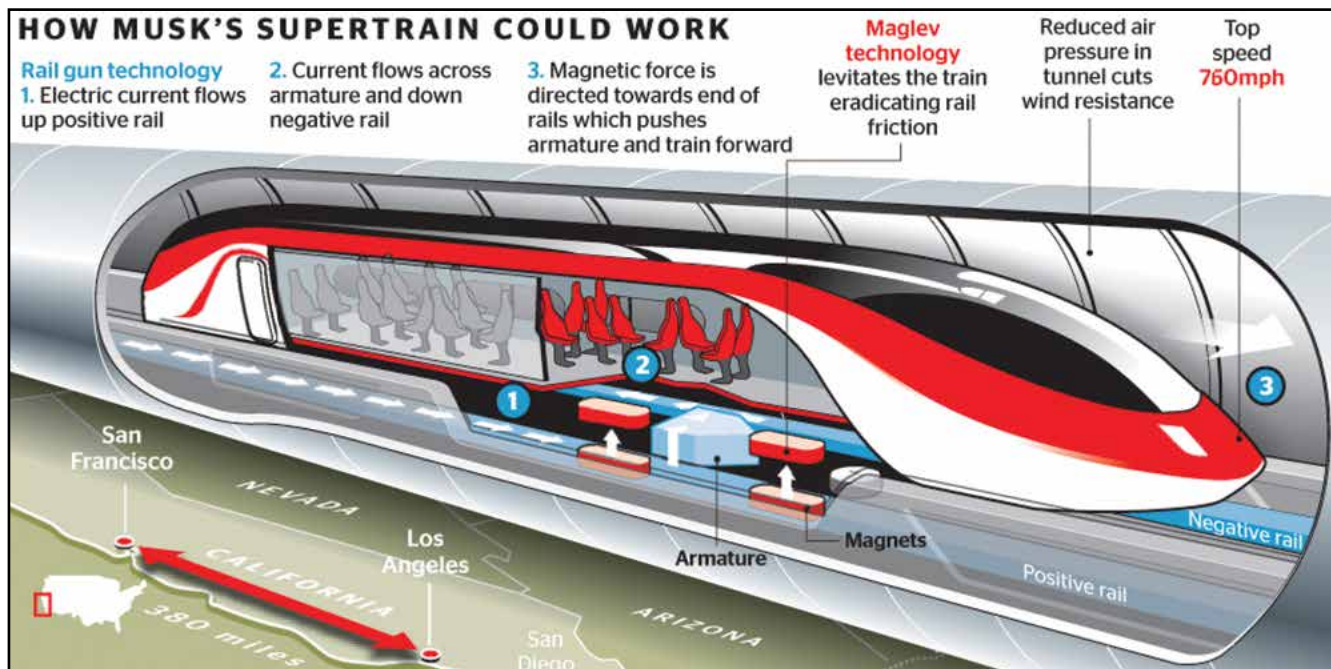
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going from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Chicago, Illinois within 45 minutes. People literally could commute over incredible distance with this technology.

The basic premise of the technology is that all of the air is pumped out of a sealed tunnel, and then trains/transport capsules would move through those tubes. Those evacuated tubes can be bored through rock, or laid on or above ground (similar to

While the technology is new, it is not patented nor owned by a single company. The original idea for the Hyperloop came from an interview that Tesla Motors and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk did back in 2012. He didn't want to build this system of low-pressure tubes and pod cars himself, so the idea was picked up by anyone who wanted to try for themselves. There are two companies that are working very hard on the technology; Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HTT), and Hyperloop

The autonomous vehicle levitates slightly above the track and glides at faster-than-airline speeds over long distances. It also eliminates direct emissions, noise, delay, weather concerns and pilot error. It's the next mode of transportation. The technology also strives to be completely self-sufficient system that relies on renewable energy, among others, to produce enough energy to power the system in its entirety. Protected from the elements, and utilizing state-of-the-art technology,



conventional tracks). Some designs even allow them to be transoceanic via large-bore pipes tethered at a fixed depth, although those are very much theoretical designs.

While not the originator nor patent owner of the Hyperloop technology, Musk deserves the credit for recognizing that it is a concept whose time has come. The main difference in Musk's Hyperloop proposal is the air cushion and turbine compressors as opposed to maglev which many others have proposed.

One (H1). A partner that has been working with HTT and H1 is AECOM, but AECOM has been contributing their engineering services to HTT/H1 to assist them in achieving their goals.

Hyperloop is a new way to move people or things anywhere in the world quickly, safely, efficiently, on-demand and with minimal impact to the environment. The system uses electric propulsion to accelerate a passenger or cargo vehicle through a tube in a low pressure environment.

the Hyperloop systems are designed with safety as a primary goal.

The Hyperloop technology enables construction and operation costs that are significantly lower than any other mass transport system. Thanks to the pylons, it can be built over land already in use for public transportation, such as in the medians of freeways minimizing footprint. These reduced costs translate directly into cheaper ticket prices, connecting people and

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TECH BYTES Continued from page 9

communities, and providing new economic growth and opportunity.

HTT has reached an agreement with the Slovakian government. As next steps a route will be identified, which later is planned to be connected to Austria and Hungary. HTT has also indicated that Hyperloop ticket prices are not yet fixed, but initial estimates indicate a one-way ticket price below \$30 for a one-way trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco route. To compare, the California High Speed Rail ticket price for the same route is projected to be at between \$80 and \$90.

My research into Hyperloop yielded no material that indicated any effort to take accessibility into consideration, and the preliminary assumption at this point is that Hyperloop has not been proven viable as of yet to merit the actual investment of designing passenger tubes. However, it would be worth considering for our members to send a message to Hyperloop CEOs Dirk Ahlborn (HTT) and Rob Lloyd (H1) via contact information given on their websites (see earlier in this

section for website URLs) and remind them that accessibility shouldn't be an afterthought, that it should be given serious consideration when the time comes to design the passenger capsules and the general interactions between the company and the riders when coordinating transport, communications, and information distribution.

Our cities are polluted, our roads are crowded, and our travel experiences are now defined by chaos and calamity. Hyperloop is not just about record-breaking speed; it's about improving the entire transportation infrastructure. It's time to use resources smartly, travel green, and lower the cost of mass transit for everyone. It's very exciting to see this technology evolve, and it's clear the impact from the technology will be massive!

Note: This will be the last TechBytes article by Don Cullen. Don is no longer with TDI, as he has joined Convo Communications as Web Developer. Tayler Mayer has succeeded Don as the new Director of Public Relations, and is the new Managing Editor for TDI World.

HYPERLOOP TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES

Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HTT)

Website: Hyperlooptransp.com

Pitch: "Transportation at Rocket Speed."

CEO: Dirk Ahlborn

What makes it different: HTT is crowdsourcing a lot of the work its doing on bringing its Hyperloop to life. This means everything from funding to conversations about detailed issues and related problems. HTT is building a test track in Quay Valley, CA in the second quarter of this year.

Latest News: HTT has announced that they are bringing Hyperloop tracks to Europe.



Hyperloop One (H1, previously called Hyperloop Technologies)

Website: Hyperloop-one.com

Pitch: "Be anywhere. Move anything. Connect everyone."

CEO: Rob Lloyd

What makes it different: H1 was first to get some sort of public test, which could go a long way towards making people think of the hyperloop as something other than science fiction. Of course, this was an early, early test (the fast-moving pod didn't even have brakes and needed to be crashed into a pile of sand to stop, so there's still a long way to go. The technology the company is working on does have a sci-fi vibe, with names like Blade Runner, the Levitation Rig, and the Tube Lab.

Latest News: The first public test happened in Nevada in May 2016.



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Changing of the Guard

In TDI's efforts to advocate for accessibility in the areas of telecommunications, media, and information technology, we often find ourselves working with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). One of the people there was an important leader we had the pleasure to work with to shape an accessible world: Gregory Hlibok, Chief of Disability Rights Office (DRO) in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. In April 2016, Hlibok in a surprise announcement during his keynote presentation at the 'Accessible World' conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania stated that it would be his last presentation in his current capacity at FCC due to his long and illustrious career with the FCC coming to an end.

Background on Gregory Hlibok

Admitted to the New York Bar, Hlibok holds a bachelor's degree in government from Gallaudet University obtained in 1989 and a juris doctorate from Hofstra University School of Law obtained in 1994. He is vice president of the Board of Trustees of his alma mater, Lexington School for the Deaf. He is an active member of several organizations, including Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc., National Association of the Deaf, and Maryland Association of the Deaf.

Hlibok is also known for his leadership role during the Deaf President Now (DPN) movement at Gallaudet University in 1988. Elected president of the Student Body Government only a day before the March 1 rally, Hlibok found himself thrust into the spotlight as the official student leader of DPN. A member of a close-knit New York



Gregory Hlibok

deaf family, which included two older brothers who had attended Gallaudet, Hlibok quickly mastered the political savvy of politicians twice his age.

During DPN, Hlibok emerged as one of the "Gallaudet four," a quartet of students that included Tim Rarus, Jerry Covell, and Bridgetta Bourne, all of whom took on the roles of leaders and negotiators during the week-long protest.

Known for his calm professionalism, Hlibok appeared on ABC's "Nightline" and "Good Morning America." He was even named ABC's "Person of the Week" for his role in the Gallaudet protest.

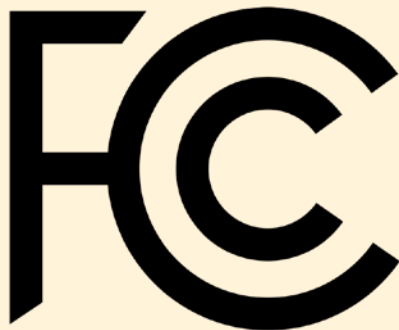
In his early career, Hlibok served in two capacities, as a private practicing attorney and a financial consultant. In 1996, he teamed up with his older brother Stephen at Merrill Lynch, where he worked as a financial consultant and estate planner. In 2001,

Hlibok then joined the FCC where he worked as an attorney. Hlibok later became the Chief of the FCC's Disability Rights Office in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau on November 16, 2010.

On naming Hlibok as the Chief of DRO, Julius Genachowski, the FCC Chairman at that time, said "Greg will be heading up the DRO at a crucial time, as the FCC ramps up to implement the most significant disability law in two decades. He possesses extensive knowledge in the field of telecommunications access for people with disabilities as well as the leadership qualities necessary to lead the office. He will be the first head of the Disability Rights Office who has a disability. Under his direction, the office will work to ensure that people with disabilities can share fully in the economic and social benefits of emerging 21st-century technologies."

Hlibok shared in an interview by Deaf People on becoming the Chief of the DRO that he had "numerous goals, but I intend to accomplish two major ones at this time. One is to complete the implementations of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act and the second is to restore the public's confidence in video relay service by bringing this program back to its core purpose which is to ensure that this program serves consumers and not for one's financial gain using unorthodox methods."

During Hlibok's tenure as the Chief of the DRO, he oversaw several critical rulemaking proceedings on the implementation of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, the development of Telecommunications Relay



FCC Disability Rights Office

For anyone interested in following the important work of the DRO, we encourage you to sign up for the accessinfo list: AccessInfo@fcc.gov is a simple way to keep informed about all of the Commission's accessibility and disability news. To subscribe, just send an email to AccessInfo@fcc.gov, and write "subscribe" in either the subject line or the main body. We will keep you updated on Proposed Rulemakings, Orders, Public Notices, News Releases, etc. Visit the archive of AccessInfo E-mail List Announcements: www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/accessinfo-email-archive

The Disability Rights Office addresses disability-related matters, including access to telecommunications services and equipment; hearing aid compatibility; access to advanced communications services and equipment; access to Internet browsers built into mobile phones; telecommunications relay services; the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program; accessible video programming and video programming apparatus (access to televised emergency information, closed captioning on television and television programs on the Internet, video description, and accessible user interfaces, text menus, and program guides).

DRO provides expert advice and assistance to other Commission bureaus and offices, consumers, industry and others on issues relevant to persons with disabilities. DRO initiates rulemaking where appropriate. DRO also reviews relevant agenda items and other documents and coordinates with Bureaus and Offices to develop recommendations and propose policies to ensure that communications are accessible to persons with disabilities, in conformance with existing disability laws and policies, and to ensure that they support the Commission's goal of increasing accessibility of communications services and technologies for persons with disabilities.



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Service (TRS), and various issues on accessibility of communication technologies. Since 2001 with the DRO, his work contributes to progress in TRS, which began with only one type of service, TTY relay, to several types of services, video relay services, IP relay, and captioned telephone as well as increasing captioned programs on television.

On being asked by Deaf People about his experiences with FCC in the same interview, Hlibok said "I truly enjoy working at the Commission because I get the opportunity to work on matters that have a significant impact on the lives of people with disabilities who have come to rely on telecommunications access in nearly every aspect of their daily routines and even in matter of emergencies. I am also fortunate to be working with such bright and conscientious colleagues who are very compassionate and diligent on policy matters concerning telecommunications access."

Hlibok certainly achieved both goals during his tenure at the FCC, and much more!

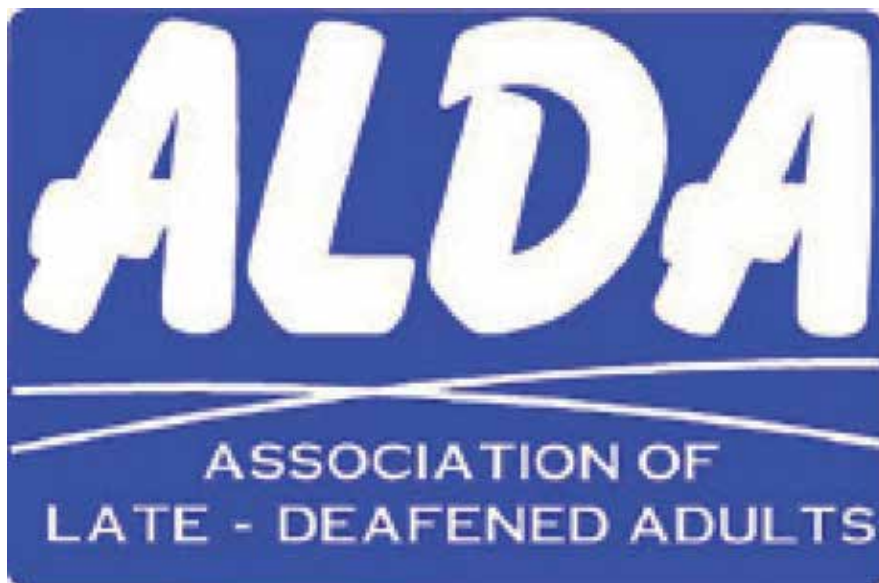
During his tenure, Chairman Wheeler has made communications accessibility issues a priority. Since November 2013, the Commission made its deaf-blind equipment distribution program permanent, made clear which entities are responsible for which parts of the delivery and quality of closed captions on television, prioritized text-to-911 availability, improved accessibility of emergency information on "second screen" devices, adopted closed captioning quality standards, expanded hearing aid compatibility obligations to cover modern wireless devices, utilized and promoted greater use of customer support via American Sign Language on videophones, established a Disability Advisory Committee, and sought to highlight the need for more video-described programing.

On May 23, 2016, ZVRS, a video relay service provider, announced "the appointment of Gregory Hlibok, Esq., as the company's new general counsel and compliance officer, bringing unique expertise and vast experience in regulatory and leadership to ZVRS's management team."

"I am honored to appoint Greg in this key role. Greg's leadership will enhance the ZVRS transformation and I could not imagine a more suitable Executive to join the Z family," said Sherri Turpin, ZVRS CEO. "Greg has an unwavering commitment to the community and having his talent and experience at ZVRS will foster an even more robust ZVRS. His addition further echoes the unwavering commitment to the enhancement of communication access by the ZVRS organization."

Claude Stout, Executive Director of TDI, sent a congratulatory message to Hlibok: "Congratulations on your move to ZVRS as its new General Counsel and Compliance Officer. Like with your historical role at Gallaudet with Deaf President Now Movement, you and others have helped set many firsts during your fifteen years of service at the Commission. History will record favorably on your leadership and example as the first person with a disability to lead the FCC's Disability Rights Office. Your cool, calm demeanor, and incredible people skills have served us well with distinction during your tenure at the Commission. Thanks very much from us in the consumer advocacy trenches. We wish you the very best at ZVRS."

Hlibok is married to Charmaine, and they have four children: Rainer (16), Brendan (14), Charlton (12), and Lauren (11). Hlibok shared that "Charmaine is an amazing wife who has been very supportive of me and is also a wonderful mother to our four very active and fun children—they keep us on our toes and enrich our lives with such joy by adding new dimensions to our household with their various interests and individual talents ranging from music to supports and entertainment. I always count my blessings to have them to come home to."



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Suzy Rosen Singleton

As of June 26, 2016, Suzy Rosen Singleton began serving as the new Chief of the Disability Rights Office of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission. Since May 23, 2016 for a few weeks, she had served in an acting capacity. Since 2012, Singleton practiced as an attorney advisor with the Commission's Disability Rights Office. Singleton also continues to serve as the Alternate Designated Federal Officer for the Commission's Disability Advisory Committee. Her legal career started in 1992, and involved civil rights litigation for the now defunct California Center for Law and the Deaf (CalCLAD), and disability policy work in the following former capacities: as the counsel for government affairs for the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), a special education law compliance officer for the U.S. Department of Education, and the ombuds for Gallaudet University. Singleton is licensed to practice in the District of Columbia, and holds a Juris Doctorate from the UCLA School of Law, and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley in 1986.

Singleton entered Gallaudet University as a student in 1984, and later transferred to the University of California in Berkeley to pursue a bachelor's degree in Political Science in 1986. Afterwards, she began working for CalCLAD, at which point she decided she'd pursue a law degree. Upon obtaining her degree, she travelled the world solo. She credits



Suzy Rosen Singleton

this experience with having brought so much insight into her life. After interviewing Singleton, Gallaudet University publication Buff and Blue (YOU 2009) wrote:

"Being a world traveler, she indulged herself with books and recommends 'Anna Karenina' as a 'must read.' When asked about favorite books, she said, 'Just like food, you cannot just choose one. You've got to have one dish that's perfect for a hot day and another for a cold day. It's the same as books – not one is made for everyone and everything.'" However, she does credit Franz Kafka as one of her favorite authors. The culture and worldly traits in her is clear in how she expresses herself."

In 2008, she launched a new campus ombuds office at Gallaudet University.

Prior to that time, she served as a special education law officer for the U.S. Department of Education.

Suzy Rosen Single is a native user of American Sign Language and is a third generation member of a deaf family. One of her siblings, Jeff Rosen, is also deaf and an attorney currently employed by Convo Communications as General Counsel. Suzy is married to Paul Singleton and they have four children.

Claude Stout, Executive Director of TDI, commented "The FCC couldn't have made a better decision here. Suzy has shone brightly with her work in the last two years at the FCC, especially as Deputy FDO with DAC, and a facilitator for one or two Subcommittees and related working groups. She has exceptional skills and acumen that not many possess. Her familiarity and experience with the years of struggle for full civil rights for people with disabilities have been deep and personal, too!"

TDI is happy to be continuing to work with the FCC, especially with Singleton in her new role as the Chief of the Disability Rights Office. We anticipate many more barriers will be broken through by Singleton in achieving a greater degree of accessibility, and quite look forward to her efforts in that regard!



Note: Eliot Greenwald, the existing DRO Division Deputy Chief, has assumed an additional role as the Special Assistant to the Bureau Chief

for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Having worked in the DRO for the past 5 years, Greenwald will continue to have primary oversight in the division for all matters related to TRS.



Paul Swaney, Stadium Journey

Taking Sights and Sounds for Granted at Sports Arenas

MEG MINARD

It's something many sports fans take for granted; the ability to see and hear a sport's game action, the fans, the public address announcer, the music (even if it is too loud at most venues), and often, those never-ending advertisements.

Four years ago I attended a game with Reggie Deal, a blind baseball sports fan as he traveled to all 30 stadiums in 30 days.

Recently I interviewed super-sports fan, Gary Noll, who is deaf. I was eagerly apprised of what features sports venues can include for fans who can't hear at all (or those with hearing impairments). These features can help deaf fans with the game day experience and enhance their passion and excitement of the game.

While I find myself muting most MLB game broadcasts on TV because the announcers talk too much about things not related to the game, it never occurred to me that someone who

cannot hear might yearn that kind of yammer. But that's TV, not a live game.

Several legal battles in the United States have occurred over the last five years or so where fans have filed suit claiming inadequate closed captioning at sports venues. Cases include University of Maryland College Park (Byrd Stadium and Comcast Center), University of Phoenix Stadium (Arizona Cardinals), and Ohio State University, to name a few.

At a live game for most sports venues in the United States, it is required by the ADA (American Disabilities Act) to have visuals for deaf fans. Basic things like:

- Captioned public service announcements, including pre-game information
- Play by play information and score
- Referee penalty explanations
- In-game entertainment announcements

- Advertising
- End-of-the-game announcements, final score and information regarding the next home game

Beside the items listed above, Gary Noll recommends stadiums include the following as a part of their closed captioning:

- Evacuation/safety information
- Entertainment and celebrations happening on the field
- Celebrity sighting
- Promotions being offered
- Fan club or other membership information
- Song lyrics

And as importantly, make the closed captioned letters BIG on the scoreboard/video board so fans in faraway seats can read the messages. This recommendation would be a benefit for all fans, not just those who

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cannot hear.

Gary also suggests the following:

- Post closed captioning on ancillary scoreboards/TVs throughout the concourse (not just in the area where the game is played)
- Employ highly-experienced captioning vendors as how they portray the spoken word makes a world of difference
- Engage or hire an individual (at guest services or otherwise) who knows American Sign Language (ASL) so deaf fans can meet, greet and send a big hello using that language
- Position the closed captioning in all areas of the venue so no matter where a deaf fans sits, he/she can read the words

Also recommended is if the venue has a big screen outside the stadium like Air Canada Center or the indoor Madison Square Garden lobby, include closed captioning on those screens as well.

The scoreboard, ribbon banners and preferably the video board is the best place for closed captioning, according to Gary. Handheld devices don't work well as looking at a handheld device prevents a fan from watching a fast paced game such as hockey or soccer. And deaf fans need their hands free for American Sign Language (ASL) communication, eating food, applauding, etc.

Understandably there's a cost associated for all of this.

The technology available today for closed captioning includes prerecorded segments and live segments.

Prerecorded segments at sporting events could include safety and evacuation instructions, advertisements, traditional song lyrics, and even common promotions. Trained caption writers, using special captioning software, transcribe the audio portion of the segment into a computer, inserting codes that determine when and where each caption will appear on the screen.

Live segments could include the public address announcer, referee/umpire explanations, and play by play information. Currently, there are four types of captioning for live events: stenographic captioning (the only method available to caption a live, unscripted sports event), manual live display, electronic newsroom, and a hybrid system. Click here for additional information on closed captioning.


With technology advancing so quickly, perhaps five years out, there can be the ability for a radio broadcaster's play by play call to be voice recognized and immediately captioned on a stadium's video board.


Thanks, Gary, for our conversations and your continued effort at advocating features that will enhance deaf fans' sports entertainment enjoyment and appreciation.


*Originally published at Stadium Journey:
<http://www.scout.com/stadium-journey/story/1689638-taking-sights-sounds-for-granted-at-sports>*




ACCESSIBILITY









Comcast Accessibility Center of Excellence

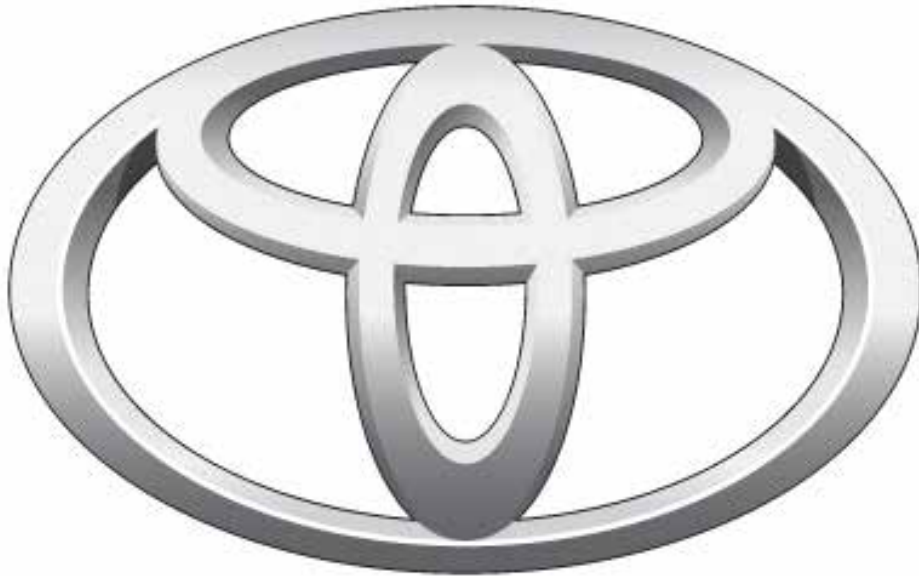
Comcast customers seeking assistance for accessibility support now have a valuable new resource at their disposal: Comcast's Accessibility Center of Excellence (ACE).

Comcast ACE will provide customers who rely on key services—including closed captioning and video description services—direct access to a specially trained customer support team dedicated to accessibility support.

Customers can reach Comcast ACE directly by phone at

855-270-0379

9:00 AM to 10:00 PM Eastern
seven days a week.



TOYOTA

TDI Board Issues Letter of Concern to Toyota Motor Corporation

Concern is mounting with over a dozen deaths caused by cars not shutting off automatically when the occupant is not in the car, especially with cars with keyless ignitions. The key thing in common with the deaths is that when parking the car in an enclosed space such as a garage, some people tend to forget that the car will not turn off if they do not press the button to shut off the engine. As a result, if the garage's air is shared with the rest of the household, the carbon monoxide will spread into that household, jeopardizing all within.

Mark Greenblatt, writer for Scripps.com, wrote in his article on keyless ignition investigations:



Wayne and Joan Flammer

Incident reports would later reveal [a car owner named] Harrington inadvertently left his 2011 Chrysler 300c running in the first floor garage. The car produced so much carbon monoxide it depleted the available oxygen in the garage and the car stalled, but not before deadly fumes

traveled three floors up and seeped into Harrington's bedroom. He died in his sleep March 19, 2012, the victim of a simple oversight that didn't have to be fatal.

In December 2011, three months prior to Harrington's death, NHTSA posted a public notice in the Federal Register saying it believed vehicles equipped with the keyless ignition feature posed a "clear safety problem," citing carbon monoxide poisoning as a significant concern for any drivers who inadvertently leave a vehicle running in an enclosed space, such as a garage. The agency proposed new safety rules, but nearly four years later the

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proposals have yet to be implemented.

Current federal regulations require cars with a traditional key to shut down if it is removed from the ignition. No such rule protects drivers of keyless ignition cars, which can continue running even after a driver walks away, taking the electronic key fob needed to start the engine. NHTSA has proposed requiring loud warning alarms to sound if drivers accidentally leave their car running after exiting the vehicle with their fob. The agency determined the costs to the industry would be "minimal" to implement the fix, but it did not instruct automakers to take action.

NHTSA said it considered requiring an auto shut-down feature, but in its 2011 proposal wrote "there are scenarios, such as leaving pets in the vehicle with the air conditioning or heating system on while the driver shops or is at a restaurant, where an automatic shut-off of the propulsion system would have adverse results."

Attorney Kushlefsky fired back, noting that leaving a pet alone in an unattended vehicle that is still running constitutes a violation of the law in 45 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Keyless ignitions are now standard in 245 models and optional in 31 others, according to the automotive website Edmunds.com.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has proposed "requiring a louder alert of at least 85 decibels if the key fob is removed from a car while its engine is running. The alarm would be similar to the sound level of a smoke alarm and audible both inside and outside the vehicle."

One obvious issue to that is when it comes to the deaf and hard of



Mercedes-Benz



HONDA



HYUNDAI

The other major automobile manufacturers notified were: General Motors, Ford, Daimler AG, Honda, Hyundai, BMW, and Volvo.

hearing. While not due to keyless ignitions, this has already happened to members in the deaf and hard of hearing community. Wayne and Joan Flammer, a deaf couple in Madisonville, Ohio, died due to their car being left running. They could not hear that the car was still running, and if an audible alert was emitted, they would still have not heard it. DTV News provided sign language coverage of the incident, which can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCrocyz7aOc>

The Board of Directors of Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) took note of the latest incident, and took action by issuing a formal letter outlining its concerns to Toyota Corporation, the manufacturer of the RAV model that the Flammers had. Copy of the letter was sent to the other major automobile manufacturers and the

U.S. Department of Transportation. That letter can be seen here: <https://tdiforaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/TDI-Letter-to-Toyota.pdf>

TDI will also be following up on the letter by meeting with the United States Department of Transportation officials, NHTSA officials, along with the officials of the automobile manufacturers. The recent deaths of the Flammers were most unfortunate, and absolutely unacceptable — this drives home the moral and legal imperative that the deaf and hard of hearing community not be discounted, that any safety feature must also take into consideration of those who are not able to hear. TDI will work to advocate to have U.S. Department of Transportation put in place a set of clear and effective safety regulations that not only benefit those who can hear, but the deaf and hard of hearing as well.



TDI In Action

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AADB = American Association of the Deaf Blind

ALDA = Association of Late Deafened Adults, Inc.

ASDC = American Society of Deaf Children

CC – closed captioning

CCASDHH = California Coalition of Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.

CGB = Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau

CPADO = Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization

CTS – Captioned Telephone Service

DHHCAN = Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network

DRO = Disability Rights Office

E-911 – Enhanced 911

FCC = Federal Communications Commission

FNPRM – Final Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

HLAA = Hearing Loss Association of America

IP – Internet Protocol

NAD = National Association of the Deaf

NBDA = National Black Deaf Advocates

NG-911 – Next Generation 911

RERC-TA = Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Telecommunication Access

SCAT/SCABT = Speech Communications Assistance By Telephone, Inc.

SoA = Speed of Answer

TAP = Technology Access Program at Gallaudet University

TDM = Time Division Multiplexing, a method of handling electronic communications

TIA = Telecommunications Industry Association

TLPC = Samuelson-Glushko Technology Law & Policy Clinic

TRS – Telecommunications Relay Service

VRS – Video Relay Service

TRS

■ (February 4) TDI, NAD, DHHCAN, HLAA, ALDA, CPADO, DSA, and CCASDHH submitted comments in support of the Petition for Rulemaking filed by IDT Telecom, Inc., seeking a change in Commission rules regarding the inclusion of intrastate telecommunications revenue in the contribution base for funding Telecommunications Relay Service (“TRS”). <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001422923.pdf>

■ (April 28) TDI, NAD, ALDA, DHHCAN, AADB, CPADO, DSA, and HLAA submitted the letter to urge the Commission to ensure that consumers are required to register with the Telecommunications Relay Service user registration database (“TRS-

URD”) only once and not for each provider. We were concerned that the TRS-URD may be developed to make consumers separately register with each provider, which could have the unintended consequence of depriving consumers of access to their chosen TRS service provider. In comparison, the benefit of allowing consumers to register with the TRS-URD only once is they may promptly switch from a default provider to another TRS service provider. We recommended that the Commission create a video providing information in American Sign Language (“ASL”) along with captions and with video descriptions of key visual elements for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to explain in detail the information to be collected from consumers for the TRS-URD registration and any additional

data that might need to be collected if there are problems with registration. In addition, a downloadable text version of the information should also be available on the Commission’s website. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001711223.pdf>

Emergency Communication

■ (February 12) TDI, NAD, DHHCAN, Gallaudet RERC, HLAA, ALDA, CPADO, DSA, and CCASDHH submitted reply comments urging the FCC to respond to the widespread recognition revealed in the comments that improvements and refinements to the WEA system are necessary and appropriate, and should be made.



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We strongly support Commission action to adopt rule changes aimed at enabling more information in WEA messages to enhance the quality and utility of WEA messages. We indicated that the Commission should proceed to allow embedded URLs, multilingual capabilities, and telephone numbers, in WEA messages – features that are routinely available today for a wide range of notifications in the private commercial world.

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001427472.pdf>

Hearing Aid Compatibility

■ (February 12) HLAA, TDI, NAD, and DHH Tech RERC submitted reply comments on the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 15-155 to adopt the Joint Consensus Proposal. We noted that the Consumer Groups and the wireless industry representatives TIA, CTIA, and CCA worked together to craft and submit to the FCC the Proposal. We are in full support of the Proposal and encouraged the Commission to expeditiously consider and adopt the framework set forth in the Proposal, which reflects an historic consensus between the wireless industry and the hearing loss community. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001427191.pdf>

■ (February 26) HLAA, TDI, NAD, and DHH-Tech RERC file comments to support the Commission's proposed modifications to the wireline handset rules to incorporate the volume control standard developed by the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA). Consumer Groups

continue to support a two-year phase in of the wireline volume control standard. We indicated that the HAC requirements must extend to handsets used with VOIP services. We also fully support the Commission's proposed rule adopting a standard for volume control for wireless handsets "to ensure more effective acoustic coupling between handsets and hearing aids or cochlear implants." <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001520562.pdf>

Captioning, Subtitles, and User Interfaces

■ (February 16) TDI, NAD, HLAA, and Gallaudet TAP filed a report to give the FCC an update on the ongoing efforts between the deaf and hard of hearing Consumer Groups and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) to collaborate and provide the Commission with guidance on updating its policies for local news captioning, including the use of the Electronic Newsroom Technique (ENT). The Consumer Groups and NAB agreed that NAB should continue its work to craft a set of short-term ENT best practices to be adopted by the Commission and used in an educational campaign by NAB to ensure that broadcasters who currently rely on ENT, provide viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing the best possible viewing experience. However, the Consumer Groups and NAB do not have consensus on the best long-term path forward. NAB noted that many stations that had sought to change from ENT to real-time captioning faced a lack of availability of qualified captioners, and expressed concern that codifying a real-time captioning requirement could preclude

the development of speech-to-text technology that could automate the creation of captions at a higher level than is currently provided by real-time captioners. The Consumer Groups, however, are concerned that a technological solution is not on the horizon in the near-term, and that the quality of ENT programming is simply not sufficient to afford a long-term solution. Accordingly, the Consumer Groups reiterate their recommendation that the Commission implement a transition schedule to phase out ENT and migrate to real-time captioning for stations outside the top 25 markets, including more aggressive schedules for stations in the top 60 markets and members of large station groups. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001462594.pdf>

■ (February 24) TDI, NAD, HLAA, and RERC-DHH submitted comments to the FCC indicating that the Commission has broad authority under the Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990 to ensure that consumers can access and utilize user display settings for closed captioning. We urge the Commission to adopt a rule that requires user display settings for closed captioning to be accessible from no lower than the first level of a menu, which should apply to the full range of devices available in the marketplace. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001518156.pdf>

■ (March 3) TDI, NAD, CPADO, ALDA, DSA, AADB, and CCASDHH jointly opposed four petitions for exemptions from the FCC's closed captioning rules. The four petitioners were Whitehead Media Ventures,

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the Marvin Show, LLC., National Asian American Coalition, and Dove Broadcasting, Inc.

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001527765.pdf>

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001527763.pdf>

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001527769.pdf>

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001527760.pdf>

■ (March 8) TDI, NAD, HLAA, and RERC-DHH filed reply comments with the FCC to respond to comments made by industry that raised issues around the accessibility of user display settings for closed captioning, and the Commission's authority to enact rules requiring that such settings be accessible from no lower than the first level of a menu. We reiterated that the Commission has broad authority under the TDCA to ensure the availability and accessibility of closed captioning, including readily accessible user display settings. We pointed out that there is a great need for a rule regarding readily accessible closed captioning settings, and industry has not indicated that it is making progress to negate this need. We emphasized that the proposed rule is clear, and would not require complex modifications or an implementation timeframe comparable to more complex requirements. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001529807.pdf>

■ (April 4) Blake Reid, TDI's Counsel filed an ex parte with the FCC to document his phone conversation with Eliot Greenwald of the Disability Rights Office (DRO) regarding

closed caption quality issues. He explained the positions of TDI, NAD, HLAA, and TAP, Gallaudet regarding the March 28, 2016 ex parte filing of the Association for Community Media (ACM) addressing certification requirements for public access channels and programmers. Consumer Groups acknowledge ACM's concerns about the burden of requiring video programming owners (VPOs) who distribute their programming exclusively on public access channels that are exempt from the Commission's closed captioning provision rules to comply with the certification rules announced in the Commission's recently released Second Report and Order. However, not all public access channel programming is exempt from the caption provision rules. The only specific treatment of public access channels in the captioning rules is in Rule 79.1(e)(9), which merely places responsibility for captioning public access, governmental, and educational access (PEG) channel programming with "the entity that contracts for its distribution"—i.e., the VPO—rather than with the channel itself. Thus, the Commission should ensure that any exemption from the certification rules applies only to programming aired on public access channels that are actually exempt from the caption provision rules. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001568168.pdf>

■ (April 22) TDI, NAD, CPADO, DSA, HLAA, ALDA, AADB, and DHH-RERC filed comments with the FCC on the issues of expanding consumers' video navigation choices and commercial availability of navigation devices. We urged the Commission to ensure that all video navigation devices are accessible to

deaf and hard of hearing consumers. If competitive devices are not subject to the same accessibility rules as current set-top boxes, then deaf and hard of hearing consumers might be dissuaded from exploring competitive navigation device options, defeating the Commission's goal of encouraging competition and choice in the navigation device market. The Commission should make clear that competitive set-top boxes would be directly subject to the CVAA. It is well within the Commission's ancillary jurisdiction to subject to the accessibility rules all other software-only applications that allow consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems by way of receiving the three information flows. <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60001690731.pdf>

■ (May 23) TDI, NAD, CPADO, DSA, HLAA, ALDA, AADB, and DHH-RERC filed reply comments with the FCC on the issues of expanding consumers' video navigation choices and commercial availability of navigation devices. We reiterated that the Commission should exercise reasonable ancillary authority to subject apps to the same accessibility rules as the functionally equivalent traditional set-top boxes. We indicated that the proposed rules should be implemented in a way that avoids consumer confusion and ensures quality customer service.

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/60002018237.pdf>

TDI Individual Membership Application Form

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Mailing Address

Street & Unit Number: _____ City: _____ State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ USA? ☐ YES ☐ NO Country: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Email Address: _____

Main Phone: () _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned ☐ FAX

Alternate Phone: _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned ☐ FAX

Mobile Phone: _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned

Website Address: _____

Additional Person's Name Desired in Listing (If Any): _____

Phone: _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned ☐ FAX

Date of Birth: _____ Email Address: _____

Check all items that you want to allow to be listed in the Blue Book:

- ☐ Name ☐ Mailing Address ☐ E-Mail Address ☐ Website Address
☐ Main Phone Number ☐ Alternate Number ☐ Mobile Number ☐ Additional Person's Number

If you do not check any items above, your name and information will not be listed in the Blue Book.



May we send you TDI eNotes, our free TDI E-Mail newsletter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes: ☐ Send to my E-Mail address ☐ Send to another E-Mail address: _____

Select One TDI Membership Rate:	1 Year	2 Years	LIFETIME
Individual-Regular:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000.00
Individual-Senior Citizen (Age 60+)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$55.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000.00

Indicate here the TDI Membership Rate that you have selected above: \$ _____

(Outside USA) Add additional \$15.00 for International Shipping: \$ _____

Additional Tax-Deductible Contribution to TDI (Fed Tax #35-1146784): \$ _____

THANK YOU! GRAND TOTAL: \$ _____

If Paying by Check or Money Order: Please make it payable to "TDI" (\$35 fee for bounced checks).

If Paying by Credit or Debit Card:



Card Issued by: <input type="checkbox"/> American Express <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Visa
Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____
Name of cardholder: _____ CCV Security Code: _____
Signature: _____ Today's Date: _____

Mail the completed form with check or payment information to:
TDI 8630 Fenton Street, Suite 121, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3803

Phone (Video/Voice): 301-563-9112 • TTY: 301-589-3006 • E-Mail: listings@TDIforAccess.org
 Save Time and Postage- Join TDI or Renew Your Membership Online at www.TDIforAccess.org

TDI Affiliate Membership Application Form

Contact Person Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Title: _____
 Business/Organization Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Mailing Address

Street & Unit Number: _____ City: _____ State/Province: _____
 Zip/Postal Code: _____ USA? ☐ YES ☐ NO Country: _____

Main Phone: () _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned ☐ FAX
 Alternate Phone: _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned ☐ FAX
 Mobile Phone: _____ ☐ Video ☐ TTY ☐ TXT ☐ Voice ☐ Captioned
 Website Address: _____

Check all items that you want to allow to be listed in the Blue Book:

☐ Name ☐ Mailing Address ☐ E-Mail Address ☐ Website Address
☐ Main Phone Number ☐ Alternate Number ☐ Mobile Number

If you do not check any items above, your information will not be listed in the Blue Book.



May we send you TDI eNotes, our free TDI E-Mail ☐ Yes ☐ No
 newsletter?

If yes: ☐ Send to my E-Mail address ☐ Send to another E-Mail address: _____

Select One TDI Membership Rate:	1 Year	2 Years
Affiliate (Business/Nonprofit/School/Library/Government)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$180.00

Indicate here the TDI Membership Rate that you have selected above: \$

(Outside USA) Add additional \$15.00 for International Shipping: \$

Additional Tax-Deductible Contribution to TDI (Fed Tax #35-1146784): \$

THANK YOU!

GRAND TOTAL: \$

If paying by Check or Money Order, please make it payable to "TDI" (\$35 fee for bounced checks).

If paying by Purchase Order, please attach the Purchase Order.

If Paying by Credit or Debit Card:



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