

Southern Illinois

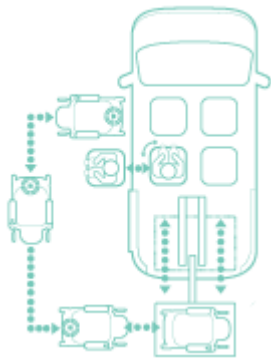
Center for Independent Living

Quarterly Distribution

February 2009

Freedom Sciences' Innovative and Creative Technology to Transport Powered Wheelchairs in and out of Vehicles

By: *Bill Kaiser*



ATRS (Automated Transport and Retrieval System) is a revolutionary new concept being introduced to the mobility market. ATRS integrates cutting-edge robotics technology with existing mobility products into a cost-effective solution for true independent transportation mobility. The system

includes a platform lift and dock, an articulating automotive seat, and the robotics and automation package which allows for remote manual and computer-assisted control of a power wheelchair.

ATRS makes it possible for an individual who is capable of transferring or himself/herself to safely transport his/her wheelchair or scooter into and out of the motor vehicle of his/her choice without the assistance of a caregiver.

need for caregivers to assist wheelchair users into the vehicle, and providing users the ability to enter and exit the vehicle completely independently. Using state-of-the-art robotics and automation technologies, this "smart chair" self-navigates between the driver's position of the vehicle and a platform lift at the vehicle's rear that secures and stows the powered wheelchair during transport.

Freedom Sciences, the company that is retailing this equipment, is currently accepting orders for ATRS. The ATRS can be used along with the Freedom Seat, which is a seat that replaces the driver's seat and can rotate and extend out allowing for an easier transfer. ATRS will be distributed through the company's existing nationwide network of mobility equipment dealers. Dealer territories for ATRS are currently being established.



For more information and to view an ATRS video, visit www.freedomsciences.com. If you have any questions about ATRS, please feel to contact Bill Kaiser or Matt Fred here at SICIL.

Inside this issue:

Beware of Ten Mistakes after SSDI Denial	2
Free Rides Program Expanded	3
Step Now and Help Fight for a Spinal Cord Injury Cure	3
Billion-Dollar Bail Outs - What Does It Mean?	3
ADA Restored to its Original State	4
Home Modifications Bring Independence to Illinoisians	5
Reporting Abuse	5
Top Ten Reasons to Love Being 50+	5

Powered wheelchair users can now transport their chairs into and out of a wide range of structurally unmodified vehicles, including SUVs, pickup trucks, and minivans. In ATRS, the Motion Control Module transforms a standard powered wheelchair into a "remote control system," eliminating the

Beware of Ten Mistakes Made after SSDI Denial

By: Bill Kaiser

Allsup, of Belleville, Illinois, is a nationwide provider of financial and healthcare-related services to people with disabilities. They have examined many of reasons why an SSDI application can be denied and the tidal wave of events that results from that denial. According to Allsup, the following insights on common mistakes can worsen the situation for someone who is dealing with the next steps after a denial of benefits.

Ten common mistakes made after SSDI denial:

1. Many applicants give up.
2. Applicants miss the appeal deadline and re-apply (sometimes several times) at the initial level.
3. **Applicants decide not to appeal.** There can be a couple of factors in this decision, including fear of pursuing the application after being told you are not disabled since you already have been denied.
4. **Applicants didn't provide enough information and detail on their initial application and make the same mistake on appeal.** One example is not providing enough detail about how your disability affects your ability to handle activities of daily living.
5. **Applicants waste time trying to correct information that was provided in the initial application and denial.** You've got to file your appeal and use that as the opportunity to clarify the information in your case.
6. **Applicants do not provide continuous updates to the DDS about their case.** While you are appealing, you should continue to provide information on doctors' visits hospital visits and medical tests, such as CT scans and MRI's.
7. **Applicants don't keep copies of their applications and records.** These documents are useful when you make an appeal.
8. **Applicants underestimate the extent of their own disabilities.** A lot of people forget the modifications that they've made to their lives accommodate their disabilities.
9. **Applicants don't know they can get representation services at any level of the process.** About 90 percent of people whose cases reach the hearing level, or level 3, have a representative for their cases, according to the SSA. What many don't realize is that they could have had a representative even earlier in the application process.
10. **Applicants don't weigh the costs of going it alone.** There is a fee for using the services of a representative only if your benefits are awarded.

If you are applying for SSDI, just remember to be thorough when completing the application. Do not leave any important details out. Provide continuous updates throughout the application process. Most of all, do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Free Rides Program Expanded

Governor Blagojevich signed legislation to allow people with disabilities statewide to ride free on all fixed-route transit systems. Senate Bill 1920 requires transit systems statewide to begin providing free rides to people with disabilities who are enrolled in the Illinois Circuit Breaker program by October 24, 2008.

In order to utilize the Free Ride Program, you must be enrolled in the Circuit Breaker Program. This program issues postcards to all those enrolled in 2008 as persons with disabilities. Circuit Breaker enrollment makes a rider eligible for free rides, and the postcard serves as proof of eligibility for the free ride benefit.

However, southern Illinois does not have any fixed route transit systems that have to comply with the Senate Bill 1920. The Saluki Express is not funded by the state but by student fees. Since the Saluki Express is not state funded, the transit system does not have to obey the state statute. As for the Rides transit system, it does not have to follow or "comply with" the state statute due to population regulations of 50,000 or more.



Step Now and Help Fight for a Spinal Cord Injury Cure

Stepnow.org is a site set up by individuals around the globe whose lives have been affected by spinal cord injury. The purpose of the site is to explore and develop global plans to aid in the fight for a cure for paralysis.

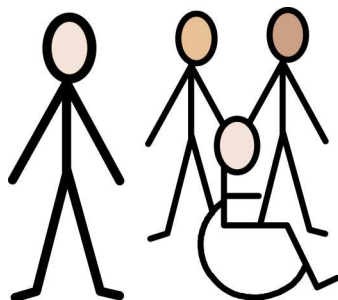
Two and a half million people worldwide are victims of a spinal cord injury, with well over 130,000 new cases added every year.

Loss of the use of limbs, loss of control of bowel/bladder, lack of sexual function, or the inability to breathe, plus untreatable neuropathic pain, spasticity, and the threat of infection, make life a battle for survival. This is not just a medical battle, but a financial battle too with a lifetime estimate between \$438,000 - \$1,350,000 per individual, depending on level of injury.

Science is ready to move this mountain of paralysis. It has proven that a damaged cord can be regenerated. But without sufficient funding it cannot deliver a cure.

Therefore, stepnow.org created a petition to urge the President, government leaders and their respective health legislators to fund spinal cord research and make paralysis a curable condition.

If you would like to sign this petition, the web address is www.thepetitionsite.com/2/signatures-for-spinal-cord-research.



Billion-Dollar Bail Outs – What Does It Mean?

This is too true to be funny. The next time you hear a politician use the word 'billion' in a casual manner, think about whether you want the politicians spending YOUR tax money.

A billion is a difficult number to comprehend, but one advertising agency did a good job putting that figure into some perspective in one of its releases.

- A. A billion seconds ago it was 1959.
- B. A billion minutes ago Jesus was alive.
- C. A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age.
- D. A billion days ago no one walked on the earth on two feet.
- E. A billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes, at the rate our government is spending it.

ADA Restored to its Original State

By: Bill Kaiser

Seventeen years ago, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act to break down the physical and societal barriers that kept disabled Americans from fully participating in the American Dream. As a result, citizens with disabilities have experienced increased opportunities, higher graduation rates, higher employment rates and lower rates of poverty.

However, since then, the full promise of the law has not been fulfilled. Through a series of court decisions, the Supreme Court has chipped away at the protections of the ADA, leaving millions of citizens vulnerable to a narrow interpretation of the law.

The Supreme Court's interpretation has created a vicious cycle for Americans with disabilities. It has created a broad range of people who benefit from 'mitigating measures' such as improvements in medicine, who still experience discrimination from employers, yet have been labeled 'not disabled enough' to gain the protections of the ADA.

The ADA Restoration Act forces courts to focus on whether a person has experienced discrimination "on the basis of disability," rather than require individuals to demonstrate that they fall within the scope of the law's protection.

On September 26th, 2008 President G.W. Bush signed the ADA Amendments Act into law. The Act makes important changes to the definition of the term "disability" by rejecting the holdings in several Supreme Court decisions and portions of EEOC's ADA regulations. The Act retains the ADA's basic definition of "disability" as an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. However, it changes the way that these statutory terms should be interpreted in several ways. Most significantly, the Act:

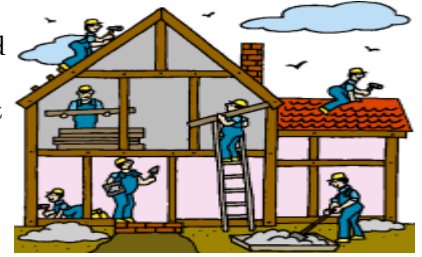
- directs EEOC to revise that portion of its regulations defining the term "substantially limits";
- expands the definition of "major life activities" by including two non-exhaustive lists:
- the first list includes many activities that the EEOC has recognized (e.g., walking) as well as activities that EEOC has not specifically recognized (e.g., reading, bending, and communicating);
- the second list includes major bodily functions (e.g., "functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions");
- states that mitigating measures other than "ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses" shall not be considered in assessing whether an individual has a disability;
- clarifies that an impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active;
- provides that an individual subjected to an action prohibited by the ADA (e.g., failure to hire) because of an actual or perceived impairment will meet the "regarded as" definition of disability, unless the impairment is transitory and minor;
- provides that individuals covered only under the "regarded as" prong are not entitled to reasonable accommodation; and emphasizes that the definition of "disability" should be interpreted broadly.

The ADA restoration tells the courts that the way they have been interpreting the ADA leaves out the very people it was designed to protect: Americans with disabilities. The ADA restoration will help all Americans with disabilities have a fair chance to have a job. Anyone who is qualified for a job should not be excluded on the basis of a disability.

Home Modification Bring Independence to Illinoisians

By: Bill Kaiser

During December, 2008, Illinois invested an additional \$2 million to support the Home Modification Program. The statewide program adds ramps, chair lifts, and other features to homes so that low-income seniors and residents with disabilities can continue to live in their communities. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), a state agency dedicated to creating and preserving affordable housing, will allocate the grant money to 14 non-profit organizations and public agencies around the state to administer the program.



With this latest round of grants, the Home Modification Program will achieve the milestone of completing improvements for 200 low-income families. Residents who qualify can receive up to \$25,000. Since its inception in 2006, the program has awarded more than \$5 million in grants to remodel homes so persons facing physical challenges can continue to stay in their communities and live independently, reducing the number of people needing residence in institutions in Illinois.

IHDA initiated a partnership with the Illinois Department of Aging (IDoA) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) to further the state's efforts to coordinate services for qualified residents. As a result of this innovative approach to preserve affordable housing, the Home Modification Program received the 2008 Program of Excellence Award in Special Needs Housing from the National Council of State Housing Agencies.

The 2008 grant awards allow for a broader geographic distribution of resources and ensure that assistance is available in areas of the state that are currently underserved or not served at all.

The organizations in Southern Illinois that are receiving the current round of funding are:

Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council – serves Jackson, Monroe, Perry, and Randolph counties. Phone Number: (618) 684-3341. (They will start taking applications in April.)

Shawnee Development Council – serves Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Union, and Williamson counties. Phone Number: (618) 634-2201.

Reporting Abuse or Neglect of an Adult Person with a Disability

If you feel you need to report abuse or neglect of an adult person with a disability, you can call the Office of Investigator General of Illinois. The phone number is 1-800-368-1463.



Top Ten Reasons to Love Being 50+

Source: AARP September & October Magazine

10. Because men can use "midlife crisis" as an excuse for any embarrassing highly-questionable activity.
09. Because you have the guts to change careers.
08. Because you get better at crossword puzzles.
07. Because you experienced the Beatles.
06. Because you've been embarrassed so much, you're all out of chagrin.
05. You are more compassionate.
04. Because you've finally become closer to your parents.
03. Because you're free to do what you want!
02. Because gray looks good.
01. Because if Keith Richards can make it into his 60's, there's hope for all of us.

SICIL

2135 W. Ramada Lane
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Phone: 618-457-3318
Fax: 618-549-0132
Email: sicilccc@neondsl.com

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.. 95
CARBONDALE, IL 62901

This newsletter is available on audio tape

SICIL is Proud to Announce That We have a Website!!!!

The website gives details about our programs and services. It also has upcoming SICIL events, the current newsletter, and helpful resources. Find the SICIL mailbox and you can email us with your comments and questions.

Our website is very user friendly and accessible for people with disabilities. You can use the mouse or simply TAB through the site. You can also change the print size and background color if it will help you to read more easily. It is compatible with screen readers if you are a person with low vision.

We hope you find our WEB SITE informational and easy to use. We welcome your comments on our new website www.sicil1.org or feel free to contact us by mail or phone.

