Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

October 2014



# Overview

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a national initiative to raise awareness about disability employment issues. The 2014 theme was: "Expect. Employ. Empower." President Obama commemorated NDEAM with a *Presidential Proclamation -- National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2014;* and through recognition of ten Champions of Change recipients for their dedication to the employment of individuals with disabilities. In related news, the National Council on Disability (NCD) issued their 2014 edition of the *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*. Among other things, the report highlights findings related to employment access and inclusion, subminimum wage, education outcomes, and data trends in disability policy. Other efforts to commemorate NDEAM included bringing together employers with perspective employees with disabilities. For example, registration is currently ongoing for *CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine’s* annual Career Expo for People with Disabilities & Veterans. The event offers job seekers the opportunity to meet with Fortune 500 companies and government agencies looking to recruit new talent, including: Boeing Company, Capital One, Northrop Grumman, Freddie Mac, U.S. Department of State, and many more.

To assist industry stakeholders in compliance with the Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA), the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) announced the publication of its *Accessibility Resource Center*, a resource guide that helps CEA members meet the requirements of the CVAA. In efforts to help people with disabilities and emergency communications stakeholders, the FCC hosted an *Accessible Wireless Emergency Communications Forum and Expo.* The event brought together industry and emergency communications specialists to present innovations in emergency services, assistive, and accessible technologies that increase information and communications access in the event of an emergency. Watch the archived webcast at <http://www.fcc.gov/events>.

**Click the headings below to link directly to a particular section.**

[Legislative Activities](#legislativeactivities)

[Regulatory Activities](#regulatoryactivities)

[Publications & Reports](#PublicationsandReports)

[Other Items of Interest](#otheritemsofinterest)

[Wireless RERC Updates](#wirelessrercupdates)

[Upcoming Events](#Upcomingevents)

# Legislative Activities

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

October 1, 2014 – October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a national initiative to raise awareness about disability employment issues. The 2014 theme was: "Expect. Employ. Empower." To commemorate NDEAM, the White House released a “Presidential Proclamation -- National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2014.” President Obama stated, “My Administration remains committed to tearing down the barriers that prevent Americans with disabilities from living fully independent, integrated lives.  We have supported programs that more effectively prepare workers, including those with disabilities, for high-growth, high-demand careers, and we have found new ways to encourage businesses to foster flexible workplaces that are open to diverse skills.  We are also working to ensure those living with disabilities have access to the resources that support employment, including accessible housing, transportation, and technology.”

In recognition of NDEAM, on October 21st, the Obama Administration honored ten Champions of Change recipients for their dedication to the employment of individuals with disabilities. In the Presidential Proclamation discussed above, President Obama pledged to combat employment discrimination and recognize those who demonstrate a commitment to diversity and accessibility in the American workforce. The areas of influence for each honoree were broad, ranging from entrepreneurship to workplace accessibility.

Among the Champions of Change honorees in the technology field, Microsoft Senior Director Jenny Lay-Flurrie is one of the leaders of the company’s Trusted Experiences Team (TExT). TExT focuses on accessibility, privacy, and online safety.

Another recipient is Tim Springer, Founder and CEO of SSB BART Group. SSB Bart Group has provided digital accessibility compliance solutions for industry, government, and educational institutions. Under Tim’s leadership, the company has taken a directive to ensure digital technology complies with regulatory standards, also empowering individuals with disabilities.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Presidential Proclamation -- National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2014](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/30/presidential-proclamation-national-disability-employment-awareness-month)

[<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/30/presidential-proclamation-national-disability-employment-awareness-month>]

[President Obama’s Remarks](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/10/05/president-obama-speaks-american-veterans-disabled-life-memorial-dedication)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/10/05/president-obama-speaks-american-veterans-disabled-life-memorial-dedication>

[Champions of Change: Disability Employment Champions Of Change](http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions/disability-employment-champions-of-change)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions/disability-employment-champions-of-change>

# Regulatory Activities

**FCC Posts Two New Videos in American Sign Language**

October 2014 – The FCC posted two new videos this month that include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretations of information concerning (a) emergency services and (b) the FCC’s Advanced Video Communications Platform. The original video that was posted in June 2014 provided information about the launch of an ASL Consumer Support Line that allows people who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing to use the service via videophone. In order to reach the population of people whose primary language is ASL, the FCC’s outreach and education is beginning to include ASL versions of materials otherwise presented in text and/or audio. The two additional videos were provided by the FCC’s Disability Rights Office and discussed:

* Advanced Video Communications Platform: Overview about the purpose and functionality of the upcoming Advanced Video Communication Platform, a tool to ensure the efficiency and competition of Video Relay Service (VRS) and the interoperability of VRS and video point to point communication.
* The Text to 9-1-1 in ASL Video: Information about the FCC’s recent action on the Text-to-911 rulemaking in order to promote the availability of the service.

For additional information about the FCC’s Disability Rights Office and to view these videos, please click [here](http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/disability-rights-office).

## Publications & Reports

**NCD Issues 2014 Disability Policy Progress Report**

October 31, 2014 – The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued their 2014 edition of the *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*. The report highlights findings related to the “Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), employment access and inclusion, subminimum wage, education outcomes, Medicaid managed care, mental health care, and data trends in disability policy.” The details of the NCD report are intended to provide policymakers, stakeholders, and advocates of disability rights with a social context regarding progress and opportunities for people with disabilities.

The 2014 Progress Report also recommends public policies and research agendas to contribute to a more inclusive and accessible society, including:

* Encouraging the Department of Transportation to partner with the private sector on researching autonomous vehicle technology and its potential for people with disabilities;
* Recommending that the Department of Labor develop a science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiative for youth with disabilities in order to prepare them for, and encourage careers in STEM fields; and
* Advising the FCC to provide guidance on best practices on including people with disabilities in research and development (R&D) throughout all phases of the development process, from concept to market.

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[National Disability Policy: A Progress Report - October 2014](http://www.ncd.gov/rawmedia_repository/ce2963eb_1446_4d0d_8823_e99f5497e275)

[<http://www.ncd.gov/progress_reports/10312014>]

**W3C HTML Techniques for Providing Useful Text Alternatives**

October 23, 2014 – The World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) update to *Working Draft of HTML5: Techniques for providing useful text alternatives* was published in October. The document is a working draft and contains best practice guidance for authors of HTML and HTML5 documents on providing text alternatives for images. The update incorporates changes and corrections from as early as October 2012 and addresses common issues related to accessible web browsing. Developed through the HTML Accessibility Taskforce, the document is published by the HTML Working Group with approval by the Protocols and Formats Working Group. An updated publication with more information on descriptions of complex images and with clarifications of other guidance is in progress and expected in the near future.

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[W3C Working Draft - HTML5: Techniques for providing useful text alternatives](http://www.w3.org/TR/html-alt-techniques/)

[<http://www.w3.org/TR/html-alt-techniques/>]

## CEA Publishes Accessibility Resource Guide for Tech Industry

October 16, 2014 – The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), a technology trade association for the consumer electronics industry, announced the publication of its *Accessibility Resource Center* (ARC). The ARC isa resource guide that helps CEA members meet the requirements of the twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA). It is a collection of CEA guides, comments, and other actions that have been consolidated into a single quick-reference resource. With deadlines for the new upcoming federal accessibility requirements approaching, the resource guidewill help electronics industry leaders prepare and comply with the CVAA guidelines.

The *Accessibility Resource Center* is available online for CEA members. CEA president and CEO, Gary Shapiro, stated, “As a leading technology trade association, it is important that CEA support its members by assisting them in complying with federal regulations even as we continue to push for a pro-innovation regulatory environment.”

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[CEA Publishes Accessibility Resource Center](http://www.ce.org/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2014/CEA-Publishes-Accessibility-Resource-Center.aspx)

[<http://www.ce.org/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2014/CEA-Publishes-Accessibility-Resource-Center.aspx>]

# Other Items of Interest

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**Georgia Tech Seeks Focus Group Participants Who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing for Emergency Alerts Research**

October 2014 – In research funded by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate, faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology are holding focus groups to discuss assistive technology features, mobile devices, and how people with disabilities respond and are alerted of emergencies. Because different disability types aren’t always considered in the design of alerting systems, this cycle of research is seeking feedback from individuals who have hearing loss. Research findings are expected to inform the development of technology and policy solutions that will optimize emergency message receipt and protective actions taken by people with hearing disabilities.

The discussions will be held at Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI) or the Atlanta Area Schools for the Deaf the first week of December 2014. The exact day and time of the focus groups will be based on participants’ availability.

The total time commitment is approximately 2 hours and participants will be compensated $40.00.

To sign-up **or** recommend a participant(s), please contact Maureen Linden at 404.894.0561 or Maureen.linden@coa.gatech.edu.

## Call for Entries: Living in Digital Times 2015 Awards Program

October 2014 – Living in Digital Times (LIDT) announced their call for entries for a four-day showcase of emerging technology at the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) this January. Partnering with the Consumer Electronics Association, LIDT is currently accepting entries for the Living in Digital Times 2015 Awards programs: Mobile Apps Showdown, Last Gadget Standing, KAPi Awards, and Everyday Health Awards for Innovation. Awards for the “best mobile apps, best new gadget top ten kids digital toys and apps, digital health products, and scholarship award” for high school and college app designers will be given to winners.

* Mobile Apps Showdown – Deadline Dec. 2
* Last Gadget Standing – Deadline Dec. 2
* KAPi Awards – Nominations close Dec. 16

The International CES will take place in Las Vegas on January 6-9, 2015 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center.

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[Be a Winner: Enter Your App or Gadget into Our Classic Contests](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=4fa904cf-1672-4ed1-b334-590365ca4500&c=5c00ec90-b6e4-11e3-bb8c-d4ae5292bb50&ch=5c7950e0-b6e4-11e3-bbfc-d4ae5292bb50)

[http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=4fa904cf-1672-4ed1-b334-590365ca4500&c=5c00ec90-b6e4-11e3-bb8c-d4ae5292bb50&ch=5c7950e0-b6e4-11e3-bbfc-d4ae5292bb50]

## Call for Papers - 2015 Web for All (W4A) Conference

The 12th Annual Web 4 All (W4A’15) Conference, an event highlighting innovations in wearable and accessible technologies, will take place May 18-20, 2015 in Florence Italy. The W4A’15 theme is “The Wearable Web,” promoting the best of web, mobile, and wearable innovations designed for people with and without disabilities. Some highlights for the event include:

* IBM will provide travel grants to both grad and undergrad students with disabilities
* Google will sponsor 6 PhD students to participate in the Doctoral Student Consortium
* Intuit will award $2,000 and $1,000 to the best technical and communication papers
* The Paciello Group (TPG) will give awards to the winners of the Accessibility Challenge

Technology and paper submissions are currently being accepted and should discuss the technical solutions and scientific insights into technologies addressing diverse user needs (i.e. access and functional needs, culture, education, emotions, etc.). W4A’15 will be accepting submission until January 23, 2015, and notify award recipients by March 4, 2015

The event is also co-located with the 2015 24th International World Wide Web Conference Web for All and the International Conference on Mobile Systems, Applications and Services in Florence, Italy.

#### Additional Information

[W4A 2015: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF THE WEB, MOBILES AND WEARABLES!](http://www.paciellogroup.com/blog/2014/10/w4a-2015-improving-accessibility-of-the-web-mobiles-and-wearables/)

[<http://www.paciellogroup.com/blog/2014/10/w4a-2015-improving-accessibility-of-the-web-mobiles-and-wearables/>]

## Call for Presenters: American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity Conference

October 2014 – The American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity (AAAED) is celebrating the enhancement of equal opportunity through affirmative action with their 2015 National Conference and Annual Meeting. AAAED is seeking presenters to address equity, compliance, and diversity as well as other emerging trends in education, government, and the workplace. The conference theme is "Toward a More Perfect Union: Celebrating 50 Years of Equal Opportunity," where presenters are encouraged to promote issues and research related to diversity and affirmative action.

The conference will be held June 2-5, 2015 in New Orleans, LA. Proposals must be submitted by December 5, 2014 and include the following information:

* Cover page with session title and presenter's name(s).
* The name, title, organization, and contact information for each presenter.
* Audience (e.g. human resources professionals, faculty) and level of presentation (e.g. introductory, advanced).
* One page description of the presentation.
* A brief resume or biography of each presenter.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, submissions, and questions, please contact Matthew J. Camardella at camardem@jacksonlewis.com.

## Career Expo for People with Disabilities

October 2014 – Registration is now open for *CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine’s* annual Career Expo for People with Disabilities & Veterans. The free event offers job seekers the opportunity to meet with Fortune 500 companies and government agencies looking to recruit new talent, including: Boeing Company, Capital One, Northrop Grumman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Freddie Mac, U.S. Department of State, and many more. The Career Expo takes place on Friday, November 21, 2014 from 10am-3pm at the Ronald Regan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004. Pre-registration and resume submissions are recommended, insuring all recruiters access to a resume database before the event. To register, please click [here](http://www.eop.com/expo).

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Attendee Registration Form](http://www.eop.com/expo)

[<http://www.eop.com/expo>]

## ODEP Announces Web Portal on Accessible Workplace Technology

October 15, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) announced the launch of the PEAT Works web portal earlier this month, a website that connects employees, employers, and technology providers with accessible tools and resources for the workplace. Organized by ODEP's Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT), PEATworks.org includes educational articles and interactive tools to assist businesses and technology providers when adopting accessible technologies for employees. The website aims to “improve the employment, retention and career advancement of people with disabilities” by promoting accessible technology and facilitating resources that assist with workplace development.

Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, states, "PEAT is the only entity of its kind bringing together employers, technology providers, thought leaders and technology users around the topic of accessible technology and employment." Some PEATworks.org features include: an action guide for employers, informational articles, and an interactive tool to help employers assess their technology accessibility practices. For more information, please visit <http://www.PEATworks.org>.

#### Additional Information

[US Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy announces launch of Web Portal on accessible Workplace Technology](http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/odep/ODEP20141935.htm)

[<http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/odep/ODEP20141935.htm>]

## Dept. of Ed Awards $121 Million in Grants for Disability Research

October 8, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) announced a commitment of more than $121 million in grants to disability research earlier this month. The investment will support research, development, technical assistance, and technology to improve outcomes for children and adults with disabilities. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated, "These investments are significant in assisting individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential." By promoting inclusion and accessibility, OSERS aims to increase opportunity and self-sufficiency to improve the quality of life for members of the disability community. Some of the grantees include:

* WestED with $8.7 million to create a Center for Systemic Improvement (CSI)— the largest technical assistance investment ever funded by OSERS;
* The University of North Carolina at Charlotte with $2.5 million for research to improve the transition to postsecondary education and employment for students with disabilities; and
* Gallaudet University with $950 thousand in funding to improve accessibility, usability, and Performance of Technology for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[$121 Million Awarded in Grants to Help Improve Outcomes of Individuals with Disabilities](http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/121-million-awarded-grants-help-improve-outcomes-individuals-disabilities)

[<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/121-million-awarded-grants-help-improve-outcomes-individuals-disabilities>]

## Georgia Tech Creates Google Glass Caption Software for Hard of Hearing

October 2, 2014 – A research team at Georgia Tech has created Google Glass speech-to-text software that facilitates conversations for users who are hard-of-hearing. The software allows people who are hard-of-hearing to wear Google Glass while another person speaks into a smartphone. The smartphone works with an Android transcription API, allowing the speech to be converted to text and displayed on Glass’ heads-up display.

The software was inspired by Georgia Tech’s School of Interactive Computing Professor, Jim Foley. When asked about the software, Foley said, “This system allows wearers like me to focus on the speaker’s lips and facial gestures. If hard-of-hearing people understand the speech, the conversation can continue immediately without waiting for the caption. However, if I miss a word, I can glance at the transcription, get the word or two I need and get back into the conversation.”

The captioning software for Google Glass is available for download at [MyGlass](https://glass.google.com/u/0/glassware/1585906026233130545). For more information about the project, please click the [here](http://cog.gatech.edu/).

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Researchers create software for Google Glass that provides captions for hard-of-hearing users](http://www.news.gatech.edu/2014/10/02/researchers-create-software-google-glass-provides-captions-hard-hearing-users)

[<http://www.news.gatech.edu/2014/10/02/researchers-create-software-google-glass-provides-captions-hard-hearing-users>]

# Wireless RERC Updates

## Wireless RERC Featured at FCC’s Accessible Wireless Emergency Communications Forum and Expo

The FCC hosted a forum promoting accessibility in wireless emergency communications. The event brought together industry and emergency communications specialists to present innovations in services, emergency, assistive and accessible technologies that increase information and communications access in the event of an emergency. With goals of advancing inclusive and accessible wireless emergency communications for all, the sessions included presentations from wireless carriers, government agencies, academia, advocates and providers of accessible notifications systems. The Wireless RERC and Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy participated in a panel titled, *Disability Strategies for Research and Action in the Field*. Other panels covered government strategies concerning inclusive emergency alerts and warnings; the transition to next-generation 911 capabilities; and outreach and engagement strategies.

Throughout the day, the FCC’s Technology Experience Center had an exhibition of prototypes and technology solutions designed to increase independence and protective active decisions by people with disabilities during times of local or national emergencies.  The Wireless RERC had a booth on the latest App Factory apps – Smart Steps Mobile and Zyrosky.  An additional CACP/Wireless RERC booth demonstrated a project funded by NIDRR, *Bluetooth Enabled External Alerting Device,* and a DHS, FEMA IPAWS funded prototype *Early Bird.*

The event was held on Friday, November 7, 2014 at the FCC Headquarters, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554. This free event was open to the public, and will remain available via webcast at <www.fcc.gov/live>.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Accessible Wireless Emergency Communications Forum](http://www.fcc.gov/events/fcc-announces-forum-promote-advances-accessible-wireless-emergency-communications)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/events/fcc-announces-forum-promote-advances-accessible-wireless-emergency-communications>]

## Wireless RERC Research in IAEM Bulletin: Navigating the New Normal

October 10, 2014 – Dr. DeeDee Bennett’s article, *Moving Towards Accessible Wireless Emergency Alerts: Sending and Receiving*, was published in October’s issue of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Bulletin. In preparation for IAEM’s annual conference in November, the theme of this issue and the conference is Navigating the New Normal. As such, Dr. Bennett’s article discusses the findings of a Wireless RERC survey on the accessibility of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs), and survey research funded by FEMA’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

The first survey, sent to people with and without disabilities, sought to determine the level of public awareness of WEA messages, accessibility of the messages and behavioral response. The survey revealed that that 36% of the respondents with disabilities had no prior knowledge of WEA, compared to 24% of the respondents without disabilities; indicating a need for more public awareness campaigns. While use of wireless devices has reached near saturation for people with disabilities, WEA has yet to establish itself amongst the population as the ‘new normal.’

The second survey, sent to IPAWS alerting authorities, sought information to gather best practices for sending accessible WEA messages to people with and without disabilities. Survey data revealed that less than 10% of alerting authorities have actually issued a WEA message, 9% of respondents provided information in accessible formats, and 7% have issued a WEA message in a language other than English. The common theme that emerged from alert authorities was the need for more education and training n when and how to send WEAs.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Moving Towards Accessible Wireless Emergency Alerts: Sending and Receiving](http://www.iaem.com/documents/Oct2014-IAEM-Bulletin.pdf)

<http://www.fema.gov/ipaws>

[<http://www.iaem.com/documents/Oct2014-IAEM-Bulletin.pdf>]

# Upcoming Events

## 17th Annual Accessing Higher Ground Conference

The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) will host the 17th Annual Accessing Higher Ground Conference from November 17 – 21, 2014 in Westminster, Colorado. The conference will offer those within higher education and industry discussions and information on use of accessible media, adoption of universal design practices, and compliance with accessibility policies. Registration for the event is now open and can be accessed [here](https://www.cvent.com/events/accessing-higher-ground-2014/registration-a9f740ba394c448881392e12b039009f.aspx?r=112099f0-8853-4544-9d51-5f114cc5a47e).

#### Additional Information

[17th Annual Accessing Higher Ground](http://accessinghigherground.org/index.html)

[<http://accessinghigherground.org/index.html>]

## 2014 Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Research-to-Policy Roundtable

The Disability Statistics and Demographics Rehabilitation and Research Training Center (StatsRRTC) announced two upcoming events in the Capitol Hill area this December: the Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics release briefing and the Fourth Annual Research-to-Policy Roundtable meeting. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, December 3rd, 2014, as both events plan to engage attendees with presentations and dialogue. The Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics briefing and workshop will be held from 9:00am -10:30am,. From 10:30am – Noon. There will also be a presentation by the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project: Health and Health Care Disparities Among Individuals with Disabilities. The Research-to-Policy Roundtable meeting is scheduled from 1:30pm - 3:30pm. The roundtable will give attendees the opportunity to discuss the many ways that research can assist in developing programs and policies that support individuals with disabilities. Registration will open for these events in September. For more information, please click the link below.

#### Additional Information

[2014 Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Research-to-Policy Roundtable](http://www.researchondisability.org/statsrrtc/event-detail/2014/08/21/2014-annual-compendium-of-disability-statistics-and-research-to-policy-roundtable)

[<http://www.researchondisability.org/statsrrtc/event-detail/2014/08/21/2014-annual-compendium-of-disability-statistics-and-research-to-policy-roundtable>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** October 2014



The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) reports on national and local public policy events and recent wireless technological advances and political activities; and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities. *Technology and Disability Policy Highlights* is published monthly by the Wireless RERC. The Wireless RERC is a research center that promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our web site at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>].

For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editors Amelia Williams [Amelia@cacp.gatech.edu] or Salimah LaForce [salimah@cacp.gatech.edu].

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