

## TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS 12.1

December 2011 & January 2012

### Overview

This winter issue reviews the many technology and disability policy developments from the months of December 2011 and January 2012. The Department of Labor issued a **Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) [RIN 1250-AA02]** seeking comment on revisions of non-discrimination and affirmative action regulations for qualified workers with disabilities. The proposed ruling would include a hiring goal for federal contractors and subcontractors as well as better record keeping of job applicants with disabilities. In an effort to increase accessibility of information, communication, and telecommunication equipment, the U.S. Access board issued a **Second Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2<sup>nd</sup> ANPRM) [Docket No. 2011-07 or RIN No. 3014-AA37]** seeking comment on accessibility standards. During the comment period, the U.S. Access Board will hold two public hearings at the Access Board Conference Center in Washington D.C. on January 11, 2012 and at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual CSUN Conference in San Diego, CA on March 1, 2012. The FCC issued an **Order** extending the reply comments deadline until February 9, 2012 "In the Matter of Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications" **[PS Docket No. 11-153]** and "Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment" **[PS Docket No. 10-255]**. In addition, the FCC issued a **Fifth Report and Order (R&O)** "In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System (EAS)" **[EB Docket No. 04-296]** to revise and implement rules regarding how Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) messages are to be processed by EAS Participants. Finally, the FCC issued a **Report and Order (R&O)** In the Matter of Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol (IP)-Delivered Video Programming: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010" **[MLB Docket No. 11-154]** concerning rules for closed captioning of video programming delivered over the internet.

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### **[Legislative Activities](#)**

#### **President Proclaims "International Day of Persons with Disabilities"**

12.03.2012 – President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Proclamation declaring December 3<sup>rd</sup> "International Day of Persons with Disabilities." The theme of the day was "Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development." The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was initiated by the United Nations in 1992, and recognizes that persons with disabilities make up almost 15% of the global population. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations stated, "This year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities reminds us that development can only be sustainable when it is equitable, inclusive and accessible for all. Persons with disabilities need therefore to be included at all stages of development processes, from inception to monitoring and evaluation." In his proclamation President Obama outlined key advances in disability rights in the United States, such as the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and further cited the importance of disability rights within the global community: "With leadership from the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, we are collaborating across governments and in close consultation with the global disability community to expand access to education, health care, and other development programs." [Source: The White House, United Nations]

#### **Additional Information:**

President Proclaims "International Day of Persons with Disabilities"

[<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/presidential-proclamation-international-day-persons-disabilities>]

United Nations: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

[<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561>]

### **[Regulatory Activities](#)**

#### **EAAC Provides Recommendations for NG911**

12.07.2011 – The Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) of the FCC released a report and recommendations concerning the accessibility of NG911 emergency services. The EAAC was formed under the provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010

(CVAA) for the purpose of ensuring equal access to NG911 by persons with disabilities. The recommendations, which highlight the areas of policy, technology, and education and outreach, are in accordance with the CVAA and the EAAC findings from their national survey of people with disabilities. Policy recommendations include regulations which support the capabilities of persons with disabilities to make multimedia NG911 emergency calls from devices used for daily communication, requirements for the implementation of interim text-to-911, and requirements to ensure the quality of video, text, and voice communication. Technical and Education recommendations emphasize the need for the FCC to make all NG911 requirements based on the communication functions and not the device type, the FCC and DOJ coordinate to create a mechanism by which persons with disabilities can make trial 9-1-1 calls, and that targeted campaigns to educate consumers on NG911 should be created specifically for people with disabilities. [Source: FCC]

**Additional Information:**

[EAAC Report](#)

[<http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=6016877823>]

**The DoL Proposes New Hiring Goals to Increase Employment of People with Disabilities**

12.08.2011 – The Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs has issued a **Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) [RIN 1250-AA02]** seeking comment for revisions on non-discrimination and affirmative action regulations for qualified workers with disabilities under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Currently, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 13 percent compared to 8.6 percent of people without disabilities. The proposed rule would include, among other requirements, a hiring goal of 7 percent of employees with disabilities by federal contractors and subcontractors, records to be kept by contractors as to the number of job applicants and employees with disabilities, and written procedures for processing accommodation requests by people with disabilities. According to the Secretary of Labor, Hilda L. Solis, “This proposed rule represents one of the most significant advances in protecting the civil rights of workers with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. President Obama has demonstrated a commitment to people with disabilities. This proposed rule would help federal contractors better fulfill their legal responsibility to hire qualified workers with disabilities.” Comments on the NPRM are due on February 7, 2012. [Source: Department of Labor]

**Additional Information:**

[Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#)

[<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-09/pdf/2011-31371.pdf>]

**New Accessibility Standards for Information and Communication Technology**

12.08.2011 – The U.S. Access Board issued a **Second Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2<sup>nd</sup> ANPRM) [Docket No. 2011-07 or RIN No. 3014-AA37]** seeking comment on standards

issued under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the guidelines issued under Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 which concern updating accessibility requirements for information and communication technology. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act establishes standards for Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility, while Section 255 ensures accessibility guidelines for telecommunications equipment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ANPRM addresses new accessibility guidelines and requirements which will align with new technologies and ensures that both Section 508 and 255 are consistent. The proposed guidelines and requirements include various accessibility aspects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) including functional performance, technical requirements, hardware and audio output functionality, real time simultaneous conversation via audio, text, and video, and product support and services. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ANPRM encourages *direct* access to equipment functionality and the inclusion of people with disabilities in the design process. Comments are due on March 7, 2012. The U.S. Access Board will be holding two public hearings during the comment period at the Access Board Conference Center in Washington D.C. on January 11, 2012 and at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual CSUN Conference in San Diego, CA on March 1, 2012. [Source: U.S. Access Board]

**Additional Information:**

[U.S. Access Board Press Release](#)

[<http://www.access-board.gov/news/ict-draft-rule.htm>]

[2<sup>nd</sup> Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making](#)

[<http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/refresh/draft-rule.htm>]

**Apps for Underserved Communities Challenge**

12.15.2011 – As part of the FCC and Knight Foundation’s efforts toward digital inclusion and broadband adoption, a contest was held for people to create apps toward bringing local information to underserved communities. According to Damian Thorman, the National Program Director for the Knight Foundation’s Technology for Engagement Initiative, “Technology is increasingly providing new opportunities to help strengthen our democracy. Yet, that potential will only be realized when more Americans have Internet access. We are excited by the fact these winner are using relevant information to entice more people to get online, and for using technology to solve every day, local problems.” Among the winning designs were apps that provide arrival times for local public transportation riders, allow for text to speech delivery of job postings, and enable collection and dissemination of accessibility information to people with disabilities. The Access Together App, which enables collection and dissemination of accessibility information, was awarded an additional prize as the Most Replicable Application. [Source: FCC]

**Additional Information:**

[Apps for Communities Challenge](#)

[[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2011/db1215/DOC-311548A1.pdf](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2011/db1215/DOC-311548A1.pdf)]

### **Reply Comments Deadline Extended on NG911 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

12.21.2011 – The FCC issued an **Order** “In the Matter of Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications” [**PS Docket No. 11-153**] and “Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment” [**PS Docket No. 10-255**] regarding the request for an extension of the reply comments deadline. The FCC granted the request made collectively by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials – International (APCO), and CTIA – The Wireless Association (CTIA), named collectively as the Joint Parties, as well as the request made by 4G Americas to extend the reply comments deadline to February 9, 2012. In their request, the Joint Parties stated an extension was needed to properly review and consider two newly released reports, including the Emergency Access Advisory Committee report released on December 7, 2011, which provides accessibility recommendations for NG911, and the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS) report released on December 12, 2011, which outlines possible solutions for an Interim Non-Voice Emergency Service (INES). The FCC thus extended the deadline to allow “meaningful time to review, analyze, and comment on all of the information in the record, including the EAAC and ATIS-INES Incubator reports.” [Source: FCC]

### **Additional Information:**

[Order \[PS Docket No. 11-153\] & \[PS Docket No. 10-255\]](#)

[[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/index.do?document=311638](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=311638)]

EAAC Report

[<http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=6016877823>]

ATIS Document Download Center

[<http://www.atis.org/docstore/default.aspx>]

### **FCC Revises Rules for EAS Messages**

01.10.2011 – The FCC issued a **Fifth Report and Order (R&O)** “In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System (EAS)” [**EB Docket No. 04-296**] to revise and implement rules contained in Part 11 of the EAS rules regarding how Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) messages are processed by EAS Participants. The **R&O** requires that EAS participants are able to convert and process CAP messages into a format outlined in the EAS-CAP Industry Group’s (ECIG) Implementation Guide. In addition, EAS participants must monitor FEMA’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) for federal alerts, but are no longer required to monitor or transmit alerts from state governors. EAS Participants have also been permitted to use intermediary devices to receive and process CAP messages with some limitations. The **R&O** addresses the accessibility of emergency alerts by requiring the use of visual data provided in the CAP message, including additional instructional information relating to the emergency. This is important in providing to persons with hearing limitations descriptions beyond the standard fields: originator, event, location and message expiration time. The R&O also maintains the 8 second EAS two tone attention signal. A potential *barrier* to the

accessibility of CAP formatted EAS messages is the FCC's barring the use of text-to-speech (TTS) technology when the CAP message does not include an audio file. This could have a negative impact on the accessibility of EAS messages by people with vision impairments who cannot see the video crawl. [Source: FCC]

**Additional Information:**

[5<sup>th</sup> Report and Order \[EB Docket No. 04-296\]](#)

[[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/index.do?document=311900](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=311900)]

**FCC Issues New Rules for Closed Captioning**

01.10.2011 – The FCC issued a **Report and Order (R&O)** “In the Matter of Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol (IP)-Delivered Video Programming: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010” [**MLB Docket No. 11-154**] to implement rules governing closed captioning for previously televised video programming delivered using internet protocol. According to Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, “To our family members, neighbors, and co-workers living with disabilities, every day presents challenges that the majority of us rarely think about. One of those obstacles is the inability to enjoy wide-ranging video content online with the benefit of captions. The Report and Order we approve today goes a long way toward eliminating that disparity.” The **R&O** outlines requirements for owners, providers, and distributors of IP delivered video programming as well as manufacturers of devices used to display such content. The **R&O** specifies that not only must owners of video content provide caption files to distributors and providers, but that such captions must maintain at least the same quality of television captions even after distribution. Section 203 of the **R&O** outlines which devices will be required to issue video programming with a deadline for compliance of January 1, 2014. The section also requires that covered devices, including personal computers, tablets, and smartphones, must adopt functional display standards and have the ability to produce or pass-through closed captioning. Regarding the importance of this **R&O** Clyburn also stated, “When videos are captioned, deaf and hard of hearing students can learn alongside hearing students. Hearing students see how words are spelled and the visual text reinforces the message that they hear. Out in the community, the information flows much more freely and everyone benefits at home, at school, in the workplace and anywhere that people meet.” [Source: FCC]

**Additional Information:**

[Report and Order \[MLB Docket No. 11-154\]](#)

[[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/index.do?document=311981](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=311981)]

**FCC to Reform Lifeline Program**

01.31.12 – The FCC announced that it will move forward on revisions to the Lifeline Program. The Lifeline program provides discounts on telephone service to low income households. Proposed changes within the Lifeline Program would include those to eliminate waste and fraud as well as those

to modernize the program. The FCC proposes to save up to \$2 billion over 3 years by setting an initial savings target of \$200 million for 2012, creating a National Lifeline Accountability Database to prevent duplicate subscriptions to the program, and through the creation of an eligibility database to prevent potential fraud. Actions toward modernizing the program include a Broadband Adoption Pilot Program to include broadband in the Lifeline Program and additional digital literacy classes in libraries and schools. It must also be noted that as per the comments of the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), the modernized Lifeline program has changed the language from “one per residence” to “one per household,” wherein “household” is defined as an individual or group of people functioning as an economic unit. This rephrasing will expand eligibility to reach individuals who may live in group homes or may be in transient living situations. [Source: FCC]

**Additional Information:**

[FCC Modernizes Lifeline Program](#)

[[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/index.do?document=312210](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=312210)]

**Publications and Reports**

**AIM Commission Recommends Improving Accessibility for Postsecondary Students**

12.06.2011 – The AIM Commission released a “Report of the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities,” providing recommendations for improving accessibility in postsecondary education. The Commission performed a 14 month study of accessibility in postsecondary institutions which resulted in 18 recommendations to overcome accessibility barriers. Recommendations covered the main themes of legal and policy, market solutions, technology, capacity building, and demonstration projects and include recommendations such as requiring additional documentation for students with disabilities, issuing guidelines for accessible instructional materials, insuring accessibility training for college faculty, and adding closed captions or subtitles to all audio and visual teaching materials for deaf and hard of hearing students. Technology recommendations include the establishment of a federate search mechanism for people to be able to search for available AIM, the creation of accessibility wizards within software to ensure that all materials are accessible before distribution to students, and ensuring that all educational materials are not impeded by Digital Rights Management (DRM), which sometimes inhibits use of assistive devices. [Source: Department of Education]

**Additional Information:**

[AIM Commission Report](#)

[<http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/aim/publications.html>]

### **Ten Facts about Mobile Broadband**

12.08.2011 – “Ten Facts about Mobile Broadband,” a report examining the current and future impact of mobile broadband was released by the Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings. The report highlights that mobile broadband subscribers have now outnumbered fixed broadband subscribers, a trend that is expected to continue with an anticipated 3.1 billion mobile broadband subscribers by 2015 compared to only 848 million fixed broadband subscribers. The report also considers the effects of mobile broadband service such as job creation, healthcare monitoring, and public safety and emergency preparedness. An additional point considered by the report was the potential mobile broadband has to help individuals overcome the digital divide. The report states that mobile broadband technology is generally lower in cost than fixed broadband technology and also offers better internet access even in rural areas. [Source: Brookings]

#### **Additional Information:**

[Ten Facts about Mobile Broadband](#)

[[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1208\\_mobile\\_broadband\\_west/1208\\_mobile\\_broadband\\_west.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2011/1208_mobile_broadband_west/1208_mobile_broadband_west.pdf)]

#### **Other Items of Interest**

### **Commercial Mobile Alert Service (CMAS) Now Provided by Major Wireless Carriers**

01.05.2012 – AWARE, an independent forum powered by Touchstone Consulting Group, published an article on their site outlining how each of the four major wireless carriers, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless, will implement CMAS. The article highlights that the wireless carriers utilize the term “Wireless Emergency Alerts” instead of CMAS, but that the terms are synonymous. The article also provides links to each carrier’s guide to CMAS and provides a list of devices currently supported by each carrier’s WEA system. [Source: A.W.A.R.E.]

#### **Additional Information:**

[Resources for CMAS](#)

[<http://www.awareforum.org/2012/01/wireless-carrier-web-resources-for-cmas/>]

### **First Public Test of the Mobile Emergency Alert System**

01.09.2012 – The PBS and LG Electronics Mobile Emergency Alert System (M-EAS) Pilot Project performed its first public demonstration at the 2012 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES). The Vegas PBS transmitted emergency alerts to simulate scenarios such as AMBER Alerts, suspicious packages, and tsunami and tornado warnings. The alerts were transmitted via mobile DTV signals to DTV-equipped mobile devices such as phones, navigation systems, or laptops and contained rich media content such as video, audio, text and graphics. Enhanced emergency alerts are extremely important for people with disabilities, especially in providing improved accessibility. According to John



McCoskey, the Chief Technology Officer at PBS "With the Mobile EAS service, terrestrial broadcasters will be able to send everything from AMBER alert photos to detailed maps with evacuation routes, video clips, and extensive information that viewers anywhere/anytime will find invaluable in a disaster. M-EAS goes way beyond a short text message on a cell phone network that may become congested in an emergency. It's harnessing the power of 'one-to-many' transmissions from a TV broadcaster to the viewing audience." Dr. Jong Kim, the president of Zenith R&D Lab, a subsidiary of LG Electronics working on the project highlights the importance of the project in his statement, "We think this new system will be extremely valuable to federal, state and local emergency management agencies and the public they serve, while extending the community service role of public and commercial broadcasters alike." [Source: Open Mobile Video Coalition]

**Additional Information:**

[OMVC Press Release](#)

[<http://www.cisionwire.com/omvc/r/first-public-demonstration-of-mobile-emergency-alert-system--harnesses-power-of-mobile-dtv-terrestri,c9205004>]

**Georgia Tech Professor Awarded Nokia University Collaboration Funding**

01.24.2012 – The Nokia Research Center announced the recipients of its University Collaboration funding program for 2011, which included Thad Starner of Georgia Tech and his research on sign language educational tools for hearing parents of deaf children. Starner's project, "SMARTSign Mobile: Helping Hearing Parents Learn to Communicate with Their Deaf Children" includes the creation of a mobile phone app which allows parents to search for videos of certain signs and also provides games, quizzes and mini-lessons based on search requests. [Source: Nokia Research Center, Georgia Tech ]

**Additional Information:**

[Nokia Press Release](#)

[<http://research.nokia.com/news/12200>]

[SMARTSign](#)

[<http://cats.gatech.edu/content/smartsign>]

**Wireless RERC Updates**

**Congratulations go to Brian Coppola!**

Brian won the drawing for participating in our survey on the national test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS)! Brian is a 47 years old; he is hard of hearing, has low vision and lives in Massachusetts. On November 9, 2011 Brian received the national EAS test message; but he reported not hearing the attention signal or the audio message and not seeing the video crawl. He wrote, "The video crawl message went too fast. Not all stations were describing the crawl message and the signal

was not loud enough." Thanks go to Brian for his valuable input. In an effort to improve the accessibility of EAS, Brian's input, along with the other survey responses will be incorporated in a report to the FCC and FEMA. If you would like to be included in our calls for survey and/or focus group participation, please send your contact information to [John\\_morris@shepherd.org](mailto:John_morris@shepherd.org).

### **Wireless RERC Influences EAS Final Rules**

01.10.2012 – The Wireless RERC was cited seventeen times in the FCC's **Fifth Report and Order (R&O)** "In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System (EAS)" [**EB Docket No. 04-296**]. The **R&O** revises and implements rules contained in Part 11 of the EAS rules regarding how Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) messages are processed by EAS participants. The Wireless RERC comments addressed the accessibility of the EAS and were quoted extensively concerning the FCC's requirements of enhanced CAP text. It is important to note that RERC's comments had a part in the FCC reversing its position concerning the presentation of a CAP message's enhanced text. Initially, the FCC did not require the presentation of the enhanced CAP text but as explained in paragraph 73 of the R&O, EAS participants must now provide the text if the message initiator includes the text in a CAP message. Enhanced CAP text is important in order to provide additional description for persons with hearing limitations. The Wireless RERC was also cited in the FCC's decision to retain the 8 second EAS two tone Attention Signal. The RERC comments stated that the proposed three bursts of digital signal is both too short and not loud enough for hearing impaired people, and that the public has been familiar with the 8 second Attention Signal since 1975. FCC thus ordered to retain the use of the 8 second Attention Signal as an audio notice of EAS alerts. Additional comments by the Wireless RERC recommended that state plans to alert the public in an emergency include explicit instructions to notify individuals with disabilities as well as periodic updates for these instructions. The FCC stated that this recommendation was not included in the scope of this rulemaking, and no action could be taken on this measure until the data from the November 9<sup>th</sup> Nationwide EAS Test had been reviewed. [Source: FCC]

### **Additional Information:**

[5<sup>th</sup> Report and Order \[EB Docket No. 04-296\]](#)

[\[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/index.do?document=311900\]](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=311900)

[Wireless RERC Comments](#)

[\[http://www.wirelessrerc.org/publications/fcc-filings/FCC%2004-296\\_3rd%20NPRM\\_2011-07-19.pdf\]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/publications/fcc-filings/FCC%2004-296_3rd%20NPRM_2011-07-19.pdf)

### **Wireless RERC Comments on NG911 Rulemaking**

01.10.2012 – The Wireless RERC filed reply comments with the FCC in the **Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)** "In the Matter of Facilitating the Deployment of Text-to-911 and Other Next Generation 911 Applications" [**PS Docket No. 11-153**] and the "Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment" [**PS Docket No. 10-255**]. The reply comments responded to a number of issues including, interim use of text-to-911, prioritization of calls during major emergencies, long term

deployment of NG911 text and multimedia applications, and state or regional implementation of NG911. Data collected from State Equipment Distribution Programs in combination with the 2010-2011 Emergency Communications Survey conducted by the Wireless RERC indicates that not only is there a transition from TTY to text-capable mobile phones, but that people with disabilities consider text messaging an accessible option to contact emergency services. Thus, reply comments by the RERC emphasized the need for an interim text-to-911 solution for those persons with hearing and speech impairments as well as the incorporation of both text messaging as well as Real-Time Text as features of a NG911 system. In regards to long-term deployment of NG911, the Wireless RERC stressed the importance of a video calling solution in combination with Real Time Text, delivery status notification, and session persistence. In addition, reply comments call for a phase out of TTY use in transition to NG911. In regards to prioritization of calls during an emergency, the RERC indicated that during an emergency, persons with disabilities have different needs than the general public and often need to rely on a personal support network during a time of emergency. The implementation of prioritization of calls would eliminate contact between people with disabilities and their support networks, during an important time. Finally, while the RERC agrees with other commenters that NG911 should be implemented at the state level, reply comments also call for limited federal support, especially in regards to efforts to educate the public on text-to-911 and multimedia-to-911. [Source: Wireless RERC]

**Additional Information:**

[Wireless RERC Reply Comments](#)

[<http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021753132>]

**Jim Mueller, On the Conference Circuit**

Jim Mueller, project director for consumer research, presented "Universal Design in the Workplace" during a seminar at the Hire Education Conference in Hot Springs, Virginia on December 8. In addition, Mueller presented "Apportunities: Identifying application needs of wireless customers with cognitive limitation" during a panel discussion at the M-Enabling Summit Conference in National Harbor, Maryland on December 6.

**View the Apportunities PowerPoint Slides here:**

[Apportunities Presentation](#)

[<http://wirelessrerc.org/news/jim-mueller-on-the-conference-circuit>]

**Frank Lucia to Present at 66<sup>th</sup> Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference**

Frank Lucia will present "TV, Radio, Mobile Alerting for Weather Emergencies: And the Winner is..." at the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research sponsored [66<sup>th</sup> Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference](#) in March. The presentation will discuss the November 2011 Emergency Alert System (EAS) first national test, specifically highlighting the results from

Wireless RERC focus groups, which explored the effectiveness and accessibility of the test for people with sensory disabilities (blind, low vision, hard of hearing and deaf). The presentation will also compare the effectiveness and accessibility of EAS when delivered over TV or radio in comparison with delivery over mobile wireless devices, and will provide recommendations to ensure future accessibility of EAS.

### **Presentation at Accord Services "Journey Back to Life" Meeting for Workers Compensation Case Managers**

Wireless RERC researchers Ben Lippincott and John Morris presented a live demonstration of a variety of smartphone and tablet apps at Accord Services "Journey Back to Life" at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville, Georgia on January 27. Several categories of apps for use by case managers and patients recovering from critical injuries were presented, including: medical reference, patient self-management and independent living, emergency preparedness and response, and cognitive training.

#### **View the "Journey Back to Life" Presentation here:**

["Journey Back to Life" Presentation](#)

[<http://wirelessrerc.org/news/wireless-rerc-researchers-ben-lippincott-and-john-morris-presented-a-live-demonstration-of-a-variety-of-smartphone-and-tablet-apps-at-accord-services-journey-back-to-life-at-the-northeast-georgia-medical-center-gainesville-georgia-on-january-27-severa>]

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Emergency Access Advisory Committee Meeting**

The next meeting of the Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) will be held on February 10, 2012 at the FCC headquarters in Washington, D.C. The EAAC was formed under the provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) for the purpose of ensuring equal access to NG911 by persons with disabilities. The meeting is expected to review the Committees actions and achievements from 2011 as well as future 2012 activities.

#### **Additional Information:**

[EAAC Meeting Announcement](#)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/document/eaac-announcement-february-10-2012-meeting>]

#### **Abilities Expo**

The Abilities Expo will be held at the Georgia World Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia from February 17 – 19, 2012. As part of the Assistive Technologies Showcase at the Abilities Expo, the Wireless RERC will demonstrate the accessibility features of current smartphones and tablets at its "live bar", and its partners in Georgia Tech's Ubiquitous Computing Lab will demo the BrailleTouch

smartphone app. The Wireless RERC will also provide a demonstration of the upcoming CMAS cell phone alerts.

**Additional Information:**

[Atlanta Abilities Expo](#)

[<http://www.abilitiesexpo.com/atlanta/index.html>]

**Commercial Mobile Alert Service (CMAS) Forum**

The Science and Technology Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is hosting the CMAS Forum at the Las Vegas Convention Center on February 21, 2012. The Forum is being held in association with the International Wireless Communications Expo, and will offer a platform for stakeholders to discuss current and future CMAS planning, development and implementation. For more information regarding the Forum email [CMAS\\_Forum@sra.com](mailto:CMAS_Forum@sra.com)

**National Academies Workshop on Social Media**

The Computer Science and Telecommunications Board (CSTB) of the National Academies and the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Division will be hosting a workshop on the role of social media during emergency events. The workshop will be held at the National Academy of Science's Beckman Center in Irvine California from February 29 – 29, 2012.

**Additional Information:**

[National Academy of Science Workshop](#)

[<http://nasawsmworkshop.eventbrite.co.uk/?ebtv=C>]

**Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference**

The Center on Disabilities in the California State University is holding the 2012 CSUN conference in San Diego, CA at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel from February 27 – March 3, 2012.

**Additional Information:**

[Center on Disabilities Conference Welcome](#)

[<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/index.php>]

**66<sup>th</sup> Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference**

The Office of the Federal Coordinator for Meteorological Services and Supporting Research (OFCM) is hosting the Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference in Charleston, South Carolina from March 5-8, 2012. The conference acts as a place for stakeholders to "review the Nation's hurricane forecasting and warning program and to make recommendations on how to improve the program in the future." This year's theme is "Tropical Cyclone Operations and Research: Strength and Success through Partnerships and Alliances."

**Additional Information:**

66th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference

[[http://www.ofcm.gov/homepage/text/spc\\_proj/ihc.html](http://www.ofcm.gov/homepage/text/spc_proj/ihc.html)]

**5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development**

Georgia Tech is hosting the 2012 International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development, which will examine “the role of computer and communications in social, economic and political development”. The conference is at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Global Learning Center in Atlanta, GA from March 12 – 15, 2012.

**Additional Information:**

Georgia Tech College of Computing Events

[<http://www.cc.gatech.edu/events/ictd-2012-fifth-international-conference-information-and-communication-technologies-and-devel>]

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**TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS 12.1**

December 2011 & January 2012

Technology and Disability Policy Highlights 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 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, Braeden Benson [[braeden@cacp.gatech.edu](mailto:braeden@cacp.gatech.edu)], Salimah LaForce [[salimah.laforce@cacp.gatech.edu](mailto:salimah.laforce@cacp.gatech.edu)], or James White, Ph.D., [[james@cacp.gatech.edu](mailto:james@cacp.gatech.edu)].

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This is a publication of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies supported by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the U.S. Department of Education, grant # H133E060061. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education.