



June, 24, 2015

## **EXPANDING ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY: THE CITY OF PHOENIX COMMEMORATES 25<sup>TH</sup> ADA ANNIVERSARY**

Sunday, July 26 marks 25 years since the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The city of Phoenix is marking the anniversary by highlighting its efforts to improve accessibility to be one of the most accessible cities in the nation. The city remains committed to eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities, focusing on equality, opportunity and independent-living for the functional needs community.

“Protecting and expanding the rights of people with disabilities strengthens our entire city,” said Mayor Greg Stanton. “That’s why Phoenix fully embraces the Americans With Disabilities Act and why I will continue to make expanding access and job opportunities for members of the disabled community one of my highest priorities.”

In Phoenix, nearly one out of every three people report having a disability and nationwide, that number is as high as 50 million.

“The city of Phoenix is one of the most accessible city in the country,” said Peter Fischer, Phoenix’s first citywide ADA coordinator. “25 Years of the ADA has helped, but we are committed to doing more for employment, access to services, and inclusion.”

Phoenix recently received the Trailblazer Award from the Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) for its outstanding contribution to individuals with disabilities. Some of those contributions include:

**New Accessibility Icon:** Phoenix is the first city in Arizona to recently approve the new, more progressive International Symbol of Accessibility Icon symbolizing dynamic mobility and movement.

**Phoenix Mayor's Commission on Disability**

**Issues:** Comprised of 17 diverse volunteers appointed by the Mayor and City Council, the Commission advocates for disabled persons by identifying issues, and providing guidance for public and private businesses in Phoenix.



**Citywide ADA Coordinator:** In 2013, Phoenix hired its first citywide ADA Coordinator, Peter Fischer, making disability awareness a priority.

**Sports & Fitness Center for Persons with Disabilities (SPOFIT):** City contribution of \$5.5 million to build the only universally accessible sports, recreation and fitness center offering competitive, recreational and therapeutic programs for the disabled community. Located at 5031 E. Washington St.; constructed in 2011.

**Lowered Height of Light Rail Fare Boxes:** Over the next three years, the height of 62 fare vending machines will be lowered. The measure was recently prompted by Phoenix Councilmember Kate Gallego, after a local veteran in a mobility device asked for assistance in buying a transit pass.

**AZ Relay 7-1-1:** Approximately 70% of city staff are trained in how to use this system to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing individuals, as well as people with speech disabilities.

**Phoenix's Emergency Plan:** The city is in the process of updating its emergency plan to provide sheltering, evacuation, transportation, and communication resources for the disabled community in the event of an emergency.

**Parks & Recreation:** The department has implemented 25 ADA Projects since 2008, and 50 since 1999. For example, making trails more accessible for wheelchairs and conducting training for ranger staff on the use of service animals.

**The Judith Tunnell Accessible Trail, South Mountain Park:** This barrier-free trail boasts two half-mile loops comprised of stabilized decomposed granite for smoother passage while exploring one of the largest municipal parks in the country. The trail also features interpretive signage, including Braille, for the visually impaired as well as a Bluetooth technology program called SightCompass which electronically describes the trail and its surroundings. The signage improvement project was led by local student and Eagle Scout, Noah Cress.



**Accessible Pools:** Thirteen city pools are wheelchair accessible, including Telephone Pioneer which provides an ADA chair lift, wet ramp, stairs and transition wall.

For more information on the city's Equal Opportunity Department, visit: [phoenix.gov/eodsite](http://phoenix.gov/eodsite) or @PHXequalopprty on Twitter.

*Visuals and interviews available upon request.*

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