



## In Virginia. . .



### **State Takes Honors Among "Top 10 Digital States"....**

... in a survey conducted by the Center for Digital Government seeking to identify the nation's most digitally advanced state governments. The "Top 10 Most Digitally Advanced States" include -- along with Virginia (in 3<sup>rd</sup> Place) -- Michigan (1<sup>st</sup> Place), Washington, Indiana, Arizona, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Arkansas, and Colorado and North Carolina (tied for 10<sup>th</sup> Place). The award is made by the Center for Digital Government that annually examines best practices, policies and progress made by state governments in their use of digital technologies to better serve their citizens and maximize operational efficiency. The award announcement noted that Virginia had moved up to third place from sixth place (in 2002) primarily "through an ambitious effort to be more efficient and effective with scarce taxpayer resources... . In acknowledging the award, VA Governor Mark Warner noted, "Our efforts have positioned the Commonwealth to not only achieve significant cost savings, but to improve the efficiency of vital services and give taxpayers a better return on their investment." (Source: Center for Digital Government e-newsletter, July, 2004)



### **VA ADA Coalition Plans to Host a Statewide Conference...**

... next year that will include presentations, training, and other meeting activities concerning the ADA -- with experts in attendance from the Access Board, EEOC, and the Department of Justice. The Coalition hopes to hold the conference in April, 2005 and is seeking feedback from consumers, policymakers and service providers on the agenda for the conference, training topics, speakers, content, and so forth. **PF** readers are asked to pass ideas for the conference along to Kelly Gonzalez at [Kgonzalez@endependence.org](mailto:Kgonzalez@endependence.org). When sending an e-mail on this topic, include "ADA workshop idea for 2005" in the subject box. (ADA and IT Information Center, Mid-Atlantic Region Bulletin, July, 2004)



### **VHDA Reports Successes Regarding Low Income Housing...**

....initiatives. Notable accomplishments from the year include: \* VHDA Allocated federal housing tax credits for 70 rental developments that will create more than 6,500 apartment homes for Virginians \* Provided grants to 28 individuals whose incomes average \$10,000/year and who needed to have their apartments made accessible \* Provided pro bono servicing for 819 loans from 21 Habitat for Humanity affiliates \* Increased leasing rate to 98 percent in the Housing Choice Voucher program \* Held 482 Homeownership Education Classes that had more than 7,000 participants throughout the state. (VHDA News, August, 2004)



### **Commonwealth Community Trust Administers Funds ...**

... for people with disabilities who need financial management services once their caregiver relatives are no longer able to do so. The CCT administers two types of trusts: 1) Special Needs Trusts established through wills or insurance policies; and 2) Pooled Disability Trusts that are funded by the consumers with personal assets. CCT's mission is to "enhance government programs for the life long needs of beneficiaries so that they can live securely." Trust funds are used to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by augmenting basic support received from government programs such as Medicaid and SSI. (Source: The ARC of Virginia Advocacy News, July 2004)

# In the Nation. . .

## **President Bush Issues Executive Order....**

... pertaining to people with disabilities. The Executive Order establishes within the Department of Homeland Security an Interagency Coordinating Council for Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities. The EO states that the policy of the Federal Government is to consider the needs of employees and individuals served by all agencies and will facilitate cooperation among federal, state, local and tribal governments in this arena. To view the EO and related information, visit <http://www.hhs.gov/od/emergencypreparedness.htm>.

## **Microsoft Corporation's Study of Accessible Technology...**

... includes unexpected findings that 57% of computer users are likely or very likely to benefit from the use of assessable technology, and 44% of computer users use some form of accessible technology. These results indicate that the concept of "universal access" is important and integral aspect of technological design and not just an "add on" feature used by selected customers such as people with disabilities. Details of the Microsoft study may be found at <http://www.w3reports.com/index.php?itemid=519>.

(Source: ADA and IT Information Center, Mid-Atlantic Region Bulletin, August, 2004)

## **U.W. Senate Passes "Hate Crimes" Legislation that Includes...**

... people with disabilities as a protected class in addition to sexual orientation and gender. The legislation, known as the "Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act," expands federal hate crime protection to all of these groups. The Senate approved the legislation by a vote of 65-33. More information can be obtained on the UCP web site at [http://www.ucp.org/ucp\\_generaldoc.cfm/1/8/28/28-28/5584](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_generaldoc.cfm/1/8/28/28-28/5584).

(Source: ADA and IT Information Center, Mid-Atlantic Region Bulletin, July, 2004)

## **Federal Budget for '05 Appears to Maintain Fiscal "Status Quo" for...**

... services such as vocational rehabilitation services, disability research programs and special education services other than those included under Part B of IDEA. The latter program is slated to receive an increase of approximately \$1 billion – nearly 10% -- in the FY'05 budget – which begins on October 1. Although the position of the House is in line with that of the Administration, the Senate's budget figures for FY '05 have not been finalized.

(Source: Report on Disability Programs, July 22, 2004)

## **ADAPT Releases List of Worst States in the Nation for...**

... community-based services (July, 2004). The data are based on a review of Medicaid data and stakeholder input. The bottom five states in the Nation, from worst to bad, are: Mississippi, Nevada, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Illinois. The 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> worst jurisdictions were reported to be Georgia, Alabama, New Jersey, Florida and the District of Columbia. More information can be obtained from ADAPT at [www.adapt.org](http://www.adapt.org).

(Source: Report on Disability Programs, July 22, 2004)

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