

Our Mission:

To work with each client to assure that programs, parks, and facilities are accessible to everyone in the community, including people with disabilities.

Solutions | Expertise | Service

recreation accessibility
consultants, llc



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[Congratulations to the 2012 Gold Medal Winners](#)

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration collaborate annually to recognize excellence in the delivery of parks and recreation. Five community awards were presented October 16, and for the first time, an Armed Forces Recreation Award for Excellence was presented. Congratulations to the finalists in each category, and to the recipients named below!

Class I (population over 250,000): Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department, Charlotte, NC

Class II (population 100,001-250,000): Rockford Park District, IL

Class III (population 50,001-100,000): James City County Parks and Recreation Department, Williamsburg, VA

Class IV (population 25,001-50,000): Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department, CO

Class V (population less than 25,000): Durango Parks and Recreation Department, Durango, CO

Armed Forces Recreation: Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department Naval Station Great Lakes, IL

about us

Recreation Accessibility Consultants, LLC has the skill to aid park districts, park and recreation agencies, forest preserve and conservation districts, and special recreation agencies in their endeavors to provide recreation to "ALL" people.

[More About RAC...](#)

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[Montgomery County \(MD\) Revenue Authority Retains RAC for System-Wide Access Audit](#)

There are 89,004 units of state and local government in the United States, and one of them is the Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA). Created in 1957, MCRA is an instrumentality of Montgomery County, Maryland and a public corporation. The Revenue Authority was established to construct, improve, equip, furnish, maintain, acquire, operate, and finance projects devoted wholly or partially for public use, good, or general welfare. The Authority also operates nine golf courses and an airpark.

RAC was retained to conduct access audits of the courses and the airpark. Our audit team is in Montgomery County as you read this newsletter!

[NRPA News](#)

The National Recreation and Parks Congress (NRPA) was held last month in Anaheim, CA. It was another stellar show, with great sessions, exhibitors new and old, and an



excellent venue. NRPA continues to build on earlier 2012 work, when it established three pillars of principle that will guide its work. Each is discussed below.

Conservation: parks are critical in the role of preserving natural resources that have real economic benefits for communities. NRPA members are taking a leadership role here and are strong voices for the protection of open space and connecting children to nature.

Health and Wellness: parks and recreation agencies lead the nation in the improvement of overall health and wellness of communities. Parks and recreation agencies are essential partners as we face the challenge of obesity, hunger, and physical inactivity.

Social Equity: universal access to public parks and recreation is a right, not just a privilege. The benefits and values of parks, recreation, and conservation are made available to all...men, women, people with and without disabilities, the young and the old, people of all ethnic backgrounds, and people of all religious beliefs. Urban, rural, exurban, suburban...all people, everywhere deserve these benefits.

We applaud the inclusion of the Social Equity pillar. As our communities continue to evolve, as we saw last week in the elections, parks and recreation agencies must remain relevant. What guides **your** work? Do you formally include accessibility and recreation inclusion as targets or goals at your agency? Yes, we know, this is what we **do** at Recreation Accessibility Consultants, but it is also what we **believe**.

Want to learn more? Visit www.nrpa.org.

[Emails, We Get Emails...](#)

An agency in a New England state wrote asking for information about joint agreements amongst parks and recreation agencies for the purpose of jointly providing recreation services and supports for people with disabilities. Why joint agreements? It is a great way to optimize agency resources, provide programs and services to people with low incidence disabilities, and serve all of your community. It is, as a recent speaker in a political forum noted, all about arithmetic.

The fiscal crunch facing parks and recreation agencies remains real. Through partnerships though, such as the 30 Illinois intergovernmental agreements that are comprised of more than 200 communities, excellent service can be provided, costs can be shared, and per capita costs are reduced. All while meeting the ADA mandate of providing support for inclusive recreation, and providing the universally recognized smart practice of special or adaptive recreation programs.

Interested in more information about the Illinois special recreation cooperatives? Reach John McGovern at john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com or Shelley Zuniga, Senior Project Manager, at shelley.zuniga@rac-llc.com.

[Plumbing Access Problems!](#)

One of our clients sent a tongue-in-cheek collection of plumbing access problems. You can tell with a quick peek that these are real, and we hope you'll laugh as much as we did. Do remember, as you skim the images, that the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design impose requirements on urinals, accessible toilet stalls, ambulatory accessible

stalls, mirrors in restrooms, clear floor space, reach ranges, and much more. In the meantime, enjoy the fine efforts in the field to overcome a problem.

[LINK...](#)

[Shelley Says...](#)

Senior Project Manager Shelley Zuniga talks about those little bumps today...

"WHAT ARE ALL THOSE LITTLE BUMPS FOR?"

Very often when auditing a site for accessible features, including signage, clients think in terms of patrons or users with physical disabilities as the only group that the ADA applies to. Untrue - there are many types of disabilities, illnesses, and health conditions covered under the ADA, and vision impairments are one.

Not many are aware that the "bumps" that are required on signs, Braille, are named after their inventor Louis Braille. According to Wikipedia, Louis was born in 1809, in France, and was blinded in a childhood accident. While still a young man, he developed a form of communication for the blind that changed the lives of millions of people. Braille's system of dots placed in a 6 square grid was a modification of a system of communication used by soldiers in the French army devised by Captain Charles Barbier in 1821. The military system was too complicated, prompting Braille to develop his own version, which is still used today. Braille worked on his system for several years and finalized his communication system in 1824 at the age of 15. After some modification, his final version was published in 1829. In 1839, Pierre Foucault developed a device that worked in the same manner as a typewriter to create Braille lettering on paper and this tool was exhibited at the World's Fair in Paris in 1855.

This universal system, with some modifications and updates is still in use today and is required on signage at all permanent spaces in buildings as well as along egress routes. The position and mounting of the signage is equally important as individuals with vision impairments learn to feel for signage on the latch side of doors, 48" aff to the Braille lettering.

So that...is what all those little bumps are for!

[CAMS and An Excellent Question for Parks and Recreation Agencies](#)

RAC President John McGovern flew back to the Los Angeles area to speak at the California Aquatics Management School (CAMS) the week after NRPA Congress. In one session regarding policy issues arising out of the new title II and title III ADA regulations, he was discussing the issue of service animals in swimming pool water. An ocean-front aquatics manager asked him a question that stumped him: does the service animal get rescued, and if the answer is yes, where can lifeguards get training on animal rescues?

Of course we'd suggest a protocol for rescues starts with the person first. Guards should save the man or woman in distress. Second, yes, the service animal deserves aid too. That's an easy answer though. The real issue is how does a guard rescue a service animal in distress? We called the Department of Justice and they'll call us back, acknowledging on the phone that it is an issue but not having an answer to all the aspects of the question. We also called two local fire departments, believing that animal rescue training, including how to carry or remove an animal, must occur in communities with horse stables, zoos, kennels, and pet stores.

Look here next month for more about this issue.

Construction Tolerance

We often see new construction that is "just a hair" off the required dimension; sinks that are 34.25" above the finished floor, or slopes on an accessible route that are 5.3%, or grab bars at 36.5". In the 2010 Standards we are told that construction tolerances can be applied, and should be those in that industry. In the absence of an industry tolerance standard (and frankly we have seen few industries that have developed a tolerance standard), we have usually acknowledged a tolerance of 3% to 5% of the dimension. So as an example, a ramp slope max of 8.33%, with a 3% tolerance for error, might be acceptable at 8.58%.

The US Access Board published a January 2011 document titled "Initiative on Dimensional Tolerances in Construction, Dimensional Tolerances for Surface Accessibility". Amongst other recommendations, in section 1.2.5 it cites the smart practice of "...planning for a 7.5% running slope (*our emphasis here, not the max permitted 8.33%*) allows for construction inaccuracies...". ***This is a critical recommendation.*** We urge design professionals and owner/operators to never spec to the maximum. With one slight deviation, the site is now noncompliant.

The document goes on, again in 1.2.5, to note that "...a tolerance of +.05% is reasonable." As with the 2010 Standards, don't assume you know it all if you read two or three sections. We commend the entire report to you and your design team. But take the smart practice approach so you minimize reliance on tolerances...don't design to the maximum slope!

Download the document yourself at,
<http://www.access-board.gov/research/tolerances/final-report.htm>.

Stormy Weather and the Media

Some of our clients and friends in Florida, Virginia, New Jersey, and Maryland were hit by Hurricane Sandy, and then the subsequent Northeaster. We heard reports about power outages, felled trees, and horrible weather, but thankfully most fared well. It reminded us of a newspaper reporter who, in listening to discussions about ADA compliance, expressed concern that "levees" would be raised. We wanted to tell the reporter that **levees** are barriers against storm surge, while **levies** are important tools for local governments that stretch resources as far as possible. But we didn't...it is hard to win an argument with someone who buys ink by the barrel.

Social Media

Speaking of ink and old-fashioned forms of communication, here at RAC one of us (John) has realized he has little to no awareness of how to use social media. However, everyone else at RAC, and all of our client parks and recreation agencies and leaders, **do** use social media. We'll kickoff a social media access and inclusion awareness initiative in early 2013. Like us on Facebook! John can, if he wishes, send out information by fax, or make copies of newsletters on a mimeograph machine!

Disclaimer

Nothing in this newsletter is legal advice. It is instead a relaying of decisions and information about the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act to public parks and recreation. Readers interested in legal advice should seek an attorney licensed in your state that knows the ADA and can apply it to parks and recreation.

One Source.
Infinite Solutions.

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