



Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

H. Brandon Burris

Executive Director

June 24, 2009

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is happy to introduce Mr. Jamar Ennis as the newest member of the GODA staff. Jamar will serve as a Program Coordinator. While completing his degree at LSU in political science, Jamar worked as an intern for the Governor's Executive Council as well as Constituent Services. As Program Coordinator, Jamar is handling in-depth Constituent service issues for individuals with disability concerns. He is coordinating the Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum and the annual GOLD Awards. Jamar has already become a valuable asset to the GODA Team; initiating the production of The Quarter; a quarterly newsletter targeting those involved in the disability community, offering updates from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs; its goals, feats and achievements.

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is currently completing a Mayoral Committee Contact list for our internal use which serves as a directory, organized by Parish, of what resources are available in that particular jurisdiction. GODA is conducting an in-depth study of how each town in Louisiana intakes a disability related complaint/question. The goal of the study is to have a complete picture of solutions and resources that are available in the state, and how GODA can better assist in the process. In addition, a new state wide resource guide has been created to better assist in addressing and resolving constituent issues.

The upcoming GACDA meeting will be held on July 7th. The meeting will focus on emergency preparedness, fiscal impact on the disability community as a result of the new state budget, and a newly added opportunity for public comment. With completion of the Legislation Session, we anticipate a report from Representative Scott Simon relative to legislation that will affect those in the disability community.

In regards to the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI), the Department of Education will relocate the school from its current location in downtown Baton Rouge to the campus of the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) on Brightside Drive. An analysis by the Department of Education indicates that the relocation of LSVI to LSD is not only a sound and feasible option for cost savings, but it can be accomplished without compromising the integrity of either school. Merging the two schools together on the same campus, combining general functions and costs, including security, human resources, maintenance and some administrative oversight, will enable the Department of Education to achieve a net recurring savings of \$4,673,569 and a net savings of \$4,048,569 for fiscal year 2010 by this resolution.

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs continues to utilize and increase its association with disability related organizations and advocacy groups across the state. Members of the GODA staff have each taken an active role of participation with numerous events. We have worked collaboratively to host and attend various rallies at the Capitol with the R Word Campaign and LA Disability Talk. Governor Jindal issued a proclamation declaring June 13, 2009 Beauregard Buddy Ball Day in honor of their Annual Awards Ceremony in Deridder. We continue our involvement with emergency preparedness with DSS and ESF-6 functions in preparation of the upcoming hurricane season.

In the past ninety days our time has been greatly consumed with the Legislative Session and budget related items. At the present time of the draft of this report Legislative Session is wrapping up. In conjunction with session, HB1 is waiting to be finalized and signed by the Governor. We will have a complete session and budget update available at the next DD Council meeting.

Should we ever be of any assistance to the DD Council or any of its members, please do not hesitate to ask.

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