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## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES for 9/20/06

<b>MEMBERS ATTENDING</b>	<b>STAFF ATTENDING</b>	<b>Attending by Phone</b>
<b>Chet Avery Tom Dowling John Eisenburg Peggy Fields Joe Foresta Doug Owens Paula VanMeter Brenda Wickard</b>	<b>Ken Knorr Bob Krollman Jane Lively Elin Glass</b>	<b>Celestine Walker Scott Higdon</b>

The Assistive Technology Advisory Council of the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) held its quarterly meeting on September 20, 2006 in the conference room of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA). The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am by Chet Avery, Council Chair.

### **Remarks by DRS Commissioner Rothrock**

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services, opened the meeting with a welcome and brief discussion of the budget amendment process. He invited the Council to submit an idea for a budget amendment.

Commissioner Rothrock also addressed what the VATS and the VATS Council need to do before working toward legislative action that would support sustaining recycling programs statewide. VATS needs to describe in detail what the recycling program is and what cost are involved in operating a recycling program, so that legislators will know what they are being asked to support and what they will get for their financial investment.

DRS will do a display at the General Assembly, using the AT display developed for businesses so they can become familiar with assistive technology and see how it can support employment for people with disabilities. Commissioner Rothrock said that DRS has been given a date and he will let VATS know about it so they can be present to talk about recycling and other AT services and devices.

The Commissioner is also talking with Robin Ramsey of the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment Endowment (FREE) to help guide her in meeting with legislators. Robin has identified legislators in her area who might be interested in forwarding a bill to gain State support of AT recycling.

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The commissioner also invited Council members to attend a cross council meeting to be held at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in November.

## Minutes

The minutes were approved as written.

## Announcements

Chet announced that there are 2 vacancies on the Council, a representative of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA) and a consumer representative from southwest Virginia. The ATLFA has already selected their representative, Linda Harris, and the formal appointment is to be made. Chet invited Council members to recommend a consumer representative.

The Chair proposed that each Council meeting have an agenda with the following items: The Chair will open the meeting and take role, then have approval of the minutes. Next will be time for public comment and updates from Council members on what sort of AT activities they have been involved in since the previous meeting. The Council agreed to adopt this agenda.

The VATS staff has put together a proposal to establish a network of recycling resources across the State. Mr. Knorr has requested letters of support from a variety of organizations, including the Council. A letter, composed by the Chair and staff, was prepared as an attachment for the application. Copies of the letter were distributed to all council members.

## Reports

Each Council member described what activities they have been involved with and what those they represent are doing with regard to assistive technology. Everyone was actively involved in various recycling initiatives as well as getting AT to the population they serve.

Celestine Walker reported on the progress of the Lynchburg recycling planning team. A lease has been signed for space to operate the recycling program, which is adjacent to the Lynchburg independent living center. The hospital corporation, CentraHealth, has donated \$25,000 to the effort and this is being used to pay the lease. Dr Dunstan, a member of the group, has identified space at the hospital where donated equipment can be received and stored. They will be identifying board members at their upcoming meeting.

Brenda Wickard reported on the progress of the disAbility Resource Center in Fredericksburg. A contractor has volunteered to refurbish the space and the recycling program is underway. They are planning an outreach campaign so that people know about the recycling program.

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Chet continues to work with Fairfax recycling planning team that is working to set up a recycling program for the northern Virginia area.

John Eisenburg, from the Department of Education reported that DOE has given out \$ 4.2 million over 2 years to local school districts to purchase assistive technology for students. The top administrators of DOE are very supportive of this initiative and know the importance of getting the appropriate devices to students with disabilities. DOE has paid for recording textbooks for those who have print disabilities and is working with publishers of textbooks to achieve accessibility standards. DOE has a trainer from each of the 8 State universities who are working with local school districts to train educators in assistive technology.

Doug Owens, representing the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, reported that VATS staff made a presentation to the Board on recycling. Regarding the Board's grant program, since the idea of recycling crosses all committees of the Board, the best approach to obtain funding is through their innovative grants. We will identify someone to put for the grant application on recycling that can be acted upon by the whole Board. A Board member volunteered to work with whoever might put forth the application.

Paula VanMeter of the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is working on contact with the Medicaid Center to see if and how Medicaid dollars might be applied to recycling, when those dollars may not necessarily benefit Medicaid recipients. Paula is planning to talk with Sara Sacks of the Kansas AT Program to see who at the Center they worked with to establish their recycling program. It does not look favorable. DMAS can include information on recycling on their website.

Tom Dowling, a new member of the Council, said that he would be looking into how the recycling might benefit people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Tom is also working with a group on emergency preparedness to train emergency personnel on how to work with the deaf and hard of hearing in emergency situations.

Peggy Fields, representing the Department for Blind and Visual Impairments (DBVI), has been working with their Commissioner to learn DBVI's position on recycling. In the Vocational Rehabilitation department of DBVI there are limitations on recycling equipment that has been purchased with their VR monies. However, once the VR case is closed the equipment ownership transfers to the clients and they would be able to donate that equipment for recycling. Peggy will talk with Herb Patterson about the computers he is recycling to see if he might want to participate in some way.

Joe Forester has been talking with churches in the Richmond/Petersburg area to identify loan or recycling operations so that they could transfer their donated items to recycling centers.

Jane Lively, VATS staff, updated the group on the recycling initiatives across the State. She also informed the group about a collaboration with Senior Navigator that is pending funding of the grant application.

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Ken Knorr, VATS Director, overviewed the VATNet grant submitted on 9/18/06 to RSA to fund the development of a network of AT recycling programs across the State that will increase access to and acquisition of recycled AT.

Bob Krollman (VATS staff) reported on the VATS website. An extensive renovation of the website has been completed and the new site should be launched within the next month. This site has been designed with the latest accessibility features and has been reviewed and BETA tested. It has many of the same features as the previous version of the website but also has searchable community events calendar and assistive technology vendor data bases.

## **Discussion of Advisory Council Priorities**

Chet Avery, Advisory Council Chair, guided a discussion of Council priorities, development of a legislative proposal to support Council priorities and recommendations for the upcoming cross-council meeting. The primary topic of discussion was assistive technology recycling which is consistent with the mandated priorities from the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Agency, the VATS Federal funding source. The Council selected assistive technology recycling as their priority and recommended a budget amendment to support statewide recycling programs and support restoration of State funds that are used to support the VATS regional sites. These same priorities will be discussed at the cross-council meeting in November.

## **Next Meeting of the Assistive Technology Advisory Council**

The next meeting of the Assistive Technology Advisory Council is scheduled to be held at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) on December 6, 2006; and will include a presentation of the WWRC assistive technology recycling program.