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COMMUNIQUÉ

**A publication of the
Premier's Council on the
Status of Disabled Persons**



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Ce bulletin est disponible en français!

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Chairperson's Message



On behalf of the Premier's Council, I would like to extend a sincere thank-you to Barry Freeze and Patricia Kirby for their contributions to the work of the Council over the course of the past several years. Both Barry and Patricia have recently resigned from the Council after a number of years of service and I would like to thank them both for their on-going support and hard work.

Barry has served on the Council since 1999, holding various roles including that of Chair of the Council from 2003 to 2006. He remains a committed advocate for active living for all, especially for persons with disabilities, and has been a long-time member of the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability. Barry's support of all Council directives and initiatives has been invaluable.

Dr. Patricia Kirby, through her position with the University of New Brunswick, has long helped shape the direction of service delivery to persons with learning disabilities. A UNB faculty member since 2005, her contribution to advancing academic research for exceptional learners has been recognized across Canada. Patricia joined the council in 2007 as a Fredericton area representative and since this time has been a valued Council Member.

The contributions of these valued Council members are greatly appreciated and I wish them both much success within their future endeavors.

On December 3rd, the council will be publishing the third release of the *Disability Action Plan Strategy - The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*. Considerable progress has been achieved to date by government in moving our province towards a more inclusive society. However much work remains in areas of education, employment, transportation, access to information and barrier free design. It is my hope that as the province moves closer to its goal of self-sufficiency that our new government continues to recognize the role which persons with disabilities have in shaping the direction of social policy.

Executive Director's Message

As I complete my first year as Executive Director with the Premier's Council I have to extend my sincere expression of thanks to Council and staff for their support. This has been a year of change for both the Council and the office as we continue to move forward in shaping an inclusive province.



The upcoming year will likely hold many challenges for the Council as we work towards helping New Brunswick residents play their part in our society. Government initiatives in long

term care, mental health, services to seniors and inclusive education are expected to be released in the upcoming months. As Executive Director I have shared my input with various task forces and working groups with the hope that new policies better reflect the needs of persons with disabilities. The community of persons with disabilities has invested considerable effort in providing input to government and it is my hope that this input plays a key part in future initiatives.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to extend all the best for the holiday season. Wishing everyone all the best and a healthy, happy and prosperous 2011.

“Draw from the past, live in the present, work for the future.” – *Abraham Geiger*

Helping New Brunswickers manage home heating costs

If you are unable to afford the cost of heating your home this winter you may be eligible for one of the three programs offered by the Department of Social Development:

- Fuel Supplement
- Emergency Fuel Benefit
- Heating Allowance



Fuel Supplement

Overview: The fuel supplement is designed to provide assistance to eligible households to assist with the costs of winter heating. The Regular Fuel Supplement is available from November to April of each year to social assistance recipients who meet the criteria.

Eligibility: The Fuel Supplement can provide assistance to cover some of the costs of winter heating, over and above what is included in the basic assistance rate. Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Emergency Fuel Benefit

Overview: The emergency fuel benefit is designed to provide assistance to eligible households to assist with the costs of winter heating.

Eligibility: Any household in New Brunswick that is in an emergency situation and unable to afford the cost of heating its home may be eligible to receive this benefit. The department will assess eligibility on a case-by-case basis

Description: An emergency fuel benefit of up to \$550 per calendar year may be provided to eligible New Brunswick households whether or not they are receiving social assistance. This benefit is provided to eligible applicants regardless of what type of heating they use.

Heating Allowance

Overview: The Heating Allowance provides assistance for the heating costs of subsidized households in Social Development's rental programs and in Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing projects whose rental payments are subsidized by the Department. The Heating Allowance is part of the rental payment calculation for clients subsidized under these programs and is utilized to reduce their monthly rental payment.

Eligibility: Eligible clients are households who pay their own heating bills and are in rental units owned by Social Development or in Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing projects whose rental payments are subsidized by the Department.

For more information on these programs please the office nearest you:

Acadian Peninsula: 1-866-441-4149

Chaleur: 1-866-441-4341

Edmundston: 1-866-441-4249

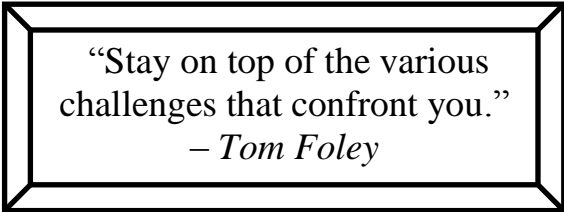
Fredericton: 1-866-444-8838

Miramichi: 1-866-441-4246

Moncton: 1-866-426-5191

Restigouche: 1-866-441-4245

Saint John: 1-866-441-4340



“Stay on top of the various challenges that confront you.”
– Tom Foley

Home Energy Assistance Program re-introduced

The provincial government is restoring the Home Energy Assistance Program, which is estimated to provide help for 55,000 New Brunswickers.

Finance Minister Blaine Higgs introduced an amendment to the New Brunswick Income Tax Act that is the first step toward restoring the program – a commitment made in Putting New Brunswickers First.

"We are pleased to return this popular program, which has helped so many people throughout the province in the past," Higgs said. "It will go a long way toward helping those people who have difficulty meeting the challenges of paying for home heating during the coldest months of the year."

It is anticipated that when the amendments go through the legislature, New Brunswickers will be able to apply for a \$100 benefit to help with their heating needs beginning in January 2011. To qualify for the benefit, family income must be less than \$28,000 annually.

The Home Energy Assistance Program will be administered by Department of Finance. Prospective clients are asked to get in touch in early January to request application forms. The number to call is (506) 453-2451.

811 TTY service launched for New Brunswick residence who are deaf



On November 18, 2010 the Government of New Brunswick extended 811 Tele-care services to New Brunswick residents who use a TTY device. By typing on a standard keyboard a person who is deaf can communicate without the need to have a 3rd party involved. Telephone companies have for many years provided a relay service for the deaf. An operator equipped with a TTY device would facilitate calls.

For the past fifteen years New Brunswick residents have had access to a registered nurse 24 hours a day seven days a week by dialing 811. The service, established in 1995, has answered more than two million calls. This year, the province estimates that 1 in five households will have used the service. Seventy two per cent of callers who indicated they planned on heading to an emergency room were guided by a Tele-Care nurse to seek other, more appropriate levels of care. This means a less stressful experience for families while at the same time making our healthcare system more efficient.

The Premier's Council applauds this innovative approach in serving all New Brunswick residents including those who are deaf.

Persons using a TTY can now call 1-866-213-7920, 24 hours a day 7 days a week and be connected to a registered nurse.

Client Success Stories: *Inspiring Journeys, Inspiring Success*

The Canadian Society for Social Development (CSSD) is pleased to announce the launch of their client success stories book *Inspiring Journeys, Inspiring Success*. The book demonstrates the innovation, creativity, determination and courage of entrepreneurs who have overcome barriers to starting their own businesses. The success stories come from graduates of CSSD's Business Abilities (BA) and Internet Business Development for Entrepreneurs (IBDE) programs, both of which are delivered online. Read the book online at www.cssd-web.org.

“Most of us spend a lot of time dreaming of the future, never realizing that a little of it arrives each day.” – *Author Unknown*

Wheelchair Safety in Transit

When brakes are applied quickly or, worse yet, your vehicle is involved in a collision; anything or anyone not properly secured becomes a projectile!

If a mobility device isn't properly secured, and the vehicle comes to a sudden stop, both the wheelchair and its passenger will be thrown. Although this may seem obvious, just in the last short while, our office has been made aware of several instances in New Brunswick where persons using mobility aids traveling in accessible vehicles have not been properly secured.

Failure to properly secure a wheelchair or scooter will propel its passenger with the combined weight of their mobility device and the person's weight multiplied by the speed the vehicle is travelling. At best, the person may only fall out of their mobility device; not a pleasant experience for anyone let alone someone with a disability. At worst ...

DO'S & DON'TS

- Don't recline the wheel chair; this could cause the person to "sub marine" slide out of the seat and shoulder belt.
- Don't block or impede the person's breathing; regardless of how well secured the passenger or wheelchair are strapped in, if their breathing is restricted it makes for a potentially dangerous, let alone uncomfortable, journey.
- Never run a seat belt or tie down over arm rests or objects that are attached to the wheelchair.
- In the absence of securement points on a wheel chair, fasten the tie downs only to welded junctions on the mobility device, or to other structural areas where the frame is fastened together with hardened steel bolts indicated by 6 raised bumps.
- Do not attach tie downs to moving or adjustable parts such as wheels or leg rests. As moving parts on a wheelchair or scooter are not designed to withstand the force of an accelerating object, any fastened tether will be the first point of failure.
- Always insure that the passenger is using a seat belt and shoulder strap properly. These safety devices can cause considerable harm if they are fastened over soft tissue.
- Always use the appropriate tie downs and insure that they are secured based on the manufacturer's directions.
- Be certain that passengers are facing forward. Wheelchairs, seat belts and tie downs are designed to work with the passenger facing forward.
- Remove any attachments such as tray-tables while in transport. These can easily be dislodged and quickly harm other occupants of the vehicle should a sudden stop occur.



December 3rd – UN International Day of Disabled Persons

On December 3rd, the Premier's Council has once again celebrated the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities, established in 1992 following the Decade of Disabled Persons.



We will be recognizing the day in conjunction with the *Disability Action Plan Strategy – The Path to Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick*. The initial report was first released in 2007 following a province wide survey of consumers and stakeholders. The report represented input from more than 1,200 New Brunswick residents who, either directly or indirectly, were impacted by a disability. The release of the 3rd status report will be available either by downloading it from our website or by contacting the office; see our contact information on the last page.

Also as part of the recognition, Anna MacQuarrie, Director of Policy and Programs for the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) will be discussing Canada's ratification of this landmark international treaty. Ms. MacQuarrie was one of Canada's key advocates in moving this initiative forward. She is truly an outstanding advocate for all persons with disabilities and she continues to make her mark within the disability rights movement in Canada.

In March of 2010, the Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities was passed into law by the House of Commons. The Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities has eight general principles.

"The principles of the present Convention shall be:

- (a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- (b) Non-discrimination;
- (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality of opportunity;
- (f) Accessibility;
- (g) Equality between men and women;
- (h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities."

Following her presentation on December 3rd, we hope to have a copy of the mornings activities posted within the multimedia section of the Premier's Council website.

Barry Freeze retires from the Council



Barry Freeze, who has been with the Premier's Council since 1999, retires. Asked what led to his decision to step down he responded "There's many people within the Saint John community who have considerable experience within the disability movement. Their skills could help the Council greatly."

In his day to day life, Barry works with Leisure Services with the City of Saint John. Married for 26 years with two daughters he has been a prominent figure within the Saint John minor sports community.

Through his work with the Premier's Council, the Active Living Alliance of Canada and other organizations, he has built a network which spans far beyond Saint John. For many people working in the field of recreation, Barry has become the "go-to guy" in resolving some of the barriers faced by persons with disabilities trying to lead active lifestyles. "Recreation is important for everyone" he says, "and this includes persons with disabilities."

Some of the milestones Barry has seen in his work with the Council include progress made with respect to inclusive education, the New Brunswick government establishment of a ventilation program and the recent deployment of the Disability Supports Program. His take on some of the outstanding challenges facing the Council was "it's not the right time yet." It's this dedication to improving the lives of persons with disabilities that has made Barry such a valued member of the Council. "Even though I'm stepping down from the Premier's Council I still plan to be very active within the community of persons with disabilities and their right to healthy active living lifestyles."

"Barry has been a tremendous asset to the Council and we thank him for his many years of contribution" says Christyne Allain, the Executive Director of the Premier's Council. We look forward to working with Barry in a different capacity and wish him all the best in his endeavors."

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons would like to thank Barry Freeze for his significant contributions in helping to make the lives of New Brunswick Residents better.

"Given the right circumstances, from no more than dreams, determination, and the liberty to try, people consistently do extraordinary things." – *Dee Hock*

Library Services for All: A Pilot Service Model for Persons with Print Disabilities



On April 19, 2010, New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) launched *Library Services for All*, a pilot service model for people with print disabilities. Through this new service model, NBPLS aspires to remove barriers standing between library resources and people who are unable to read standard print due to a variety of possible factors including vision loss, a physical disability which interferes with holding or manipulating a book, or a disability which impedes comprehension, such as a learning disability or complication from a stroke or head injury.

As part of the pilot project, seven public libraries throughout the province have been equipped with accessible work stations. These include a MERLIN CCTV unit which can magnify images up to 60 times their original size and an adaptive workstation equipped with: large print keyboard, track ball mouse, scanner, headphones, and software that allows patrons to magnify the information on the screen (ZoomText), hear scanned print or electronic text (OpenBook), interact with the computer through keystrokes and verbal feedback from the computer (JAWS), and utilize a variety of reading tools (Kurzweil 3000).

Each of these technologies can open the door to the world of literature for anyone with a print disability. People need not self identify as having a print disability to access the specially equipped work stations. However for those individuals who wish to do so, the New Brunswick public library under a special agreement with the CNIB Library for the Blind and Service québécois du livre adapté (SQLA), can gain access to talking books, descriptive videos and a variety of print/Braille resources.

Currently, the following nine libraries are equipped with accessible workstations:

- Campbellton Centennial Library
- Chatham Public Library
- Le Cormoran Public Library, Saint John
- Fredericton Public Library
- Moncton Public Library
- Saint John Free Public Library, Central Branch
- Kennebecasis Public Library, Quispamsis
- La Moisson Public Library, Saint-Quentin
- Mgr. W.J. Conway Public Library, Edmundston

The pilot project will conclude on November 30, 2010. Once completed, the New Brunswick Public Library Service will work towards equipping each of the provinces 63 branches with an adapted workstation.

For more information about this innovative leading edge accessibility initiative contact your local library or Elvira Embser-Herbert, librarian / bibliothécaire, New Brunswick Public Library Service / Service des bibliothèques publiques du Nouveau-Brunswick, (506) 444-3693.

DAW 2011

Mark your calendars and get involved!

May 29th to June 4th, 2011 will mark the 24th New Brunswick Disability Awareness Week (DAW) campaign. Each year community groups throughout the province host a variety of events aimed at helping the community better understand the challenges and capabilities of persons with disabilities. This year, the theme will once again be “Yes We Can!”. We hope to highlight some of the many successes which communities, individuals, government and business have achieved by working together towards creating inclusive and welcoming communities.



Ideas are always welcome.

Visit the DAW 2011 website: <http://www.gnb.ca/0048/DAW2011/IndexDAW2011-e.asp> for contest announcements, events and other information. To get involved or for additional information, please contact the Premier’s Council office.

Enabling Accessibility Fund

The Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) supports community-based projects across Canada that improves accessibility, remove barriers, and enable Canadians with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their communities.

The Government of Canada is building on the success of this program for people with disabilities delivered from 2007 to 2010, by providing an additional \$45 million over the next three years.

While EAF continues to provide funding for small projects, Budget 2010 expands eligibility for the program to include mid-sized projects. This enables communities to undertake larger retrofit projects and foster partnerships for creating new facilities.

Mid-sized Call for Proposals 2010:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/eaf/cfp/index.shtml

Deadline January 13, 2011

Local groups invited to apply to become community inclusion networks

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation is now welcoming applications for the establishment of 12 community inclusion networks across the province.

“These networks will provide an inclusive forum to co-ordinate poverty reduction efforts at the local level,” said Social Development Minister Sue Stultz, one of the four Co-chairs of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. “All residents, community organizations, local business, government agencies, and communities will be welcomed and encouraged to participate in their local network.”

Corporation Co-chair Léo-Paul Pinet said the boundaries are based upon traditional relationships between communities and the Department of Social Development's regional boundaries.

“Now that the network boundaries have been established, the corporation is ready to take action by encouraging poverty reduction efforts at the local level,” Pinet said. “We expect community stakeholders will be eager to organize themselves and ask to be recognized as a community inclusion network.”



Under the Economic and Social Inclusion Act, the corporation can recognize a community inclusion network provided the local group has established a structure for governance and decision making, which includes a board with representation from business, government, the non-profit sector and residents who are living or have lived in poverty.

A proposed network must have at least two letters of support from communities in their geographic area. It must also be able to leverage community resources from a variety of sources, have the ability to address the linguistic needs of both official language communities, and have an acceptable, transparent process for managing funds.

Organizations wishing to host the network are invited to submit their applications and a preliminary plan to the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation by Dec 22nd, 2010. Additional details on how to become a community inclusion network, including a map of the 12 regions, are available online.

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation: www.gnb.ca/poverty

Registered Disability Savings Plan – What are they?

A registered disability savings plan (RDSP) is a savings plan that is intended to help parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (disability amount).



Contributions to an RDSP are not tax deductible and can be made until the end of the year in which the beneficiary turns 59 years of age. Contributions that are withdrawn are not to be included as income for the beneficiary when paid out of an RDSP. However, the Canada disability savings grant, Canada disability savings bond and investment income earned in the plan are included in the beneficiary's income for tax purposes when paid out of the RDSP.

This program, first introduced in 2008, provides matching funds for contributions made to a RDSP. All Canadian Chartered banks now offer these plans.

For specifics and eligibility, please contact Canada Customs Revenue Agency at:

Telephone: 1-800-959-8281

TTY: 1-800-665-0354

Website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/rdsp-reei/menu-eng.html>

Serving more than coffee

By CAROLINA PERROTTI

From Business Takes Action, a program of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

Mark Wafer, owner of seven Tim Horton's stores in Toronto has employed over 50 people with intellectual disabilities over the course of 15 years. Delighted to share a few of his many "hands on" success stories with the Business Takes Action (BTA) team, he preferred to correspond via his BlackBerry since he was born with 20% hearing capacity. Prior to owning multiple franchises, Mr. Wafer was successful within the automotive industry and was an avid race car driver with a "can do" attitude that won him a championship. The path to career success has not always been easy: He was terminated by several employers who simply did not understand, or know how to accommodate, an employee who was deaf. Perceptions of people with disabilities are changing for the better and employers are more aware. They know how to access support services to help accommodate employees. Having personally encountered employment barriers, Mr. Wafer became an advocate for providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



“Interviewing a candidate with a disability is not any different than interviewing a candidate that does not have one.” Mr. Wafer emphasizes that the most important aspect of employment is having the right “fit”, in particular focusing on a candidate’s capabilities. Mr. Wafer explains the importance of developing and instilling confidence in candidates with disabilities, even if there is only one applicant for the position. “When a candidate with an intellectual disability receives an employment offer, his excitement level is so high and similar to the reaction of any person winning the lottery,” Mr. Wafer says. “The myths of hiring people with disabilities is the number one barrier they face. Therefore, landing a meaningful, full-paying job is extremely precious to them. This is why an employee with a disability is often one of our best employees.” At Mr. Wafer’s stores, the average tenure for an employee with a disability is seven years—in contrast to one and a half years for an employee without a disability. In his experience, low employee turnover offers many tangible benefits to his operation including 1) the reduced costs of continually training new employees, 2) purchasing uniforms, 3) administration fees, and 4) increased productivity.

“Our company is still looking into it,” is the common excuse made by some larger organizations that advertise diversity with glossy brochures and have not employed a single person with a disability.

Mr. Wafer emphasizes that educating employers is a key component to inclusion practices and he continuously meets with prospective employers to deliver this message. Two-way communication between prospective employers and support groups like Community Living Toronto (CLT) helps place employees with disabilities. He focuses on candidates with intellectual disabilities and CLT provides job coaches to support candidates with skill development. Mr. Wafer has seen several organizations preaching corporate social responsibility for years that have not actually practiced their mantra, even after they undertake the first steps towards welcoming candidates to apply to an inclusive workplace. Advertising alone is not enough and employers need to engage with support groups to find candidates. Mr. Wafer says, “A diverse and inclusive workplace is not a trend, it is the fabric of our community and everybody deserves the same opportunities pertaining to housing, education, income and access to employment opportunities. Tim Horton’s’ customers enjoy being served by ‘real’ people that make up our community.” He believes that Canada is progressing with regards to changing employers’ perceptions about hiring people with disabilities. Mark Wafer’s message is clear and inspiring—“our governments create legislation and together with the business community we can take a leading role and execute inclusion practices.”

Reprinted with permission from Business Takes Action (BTA) is a [Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters](http://www.businessstakesaction.ca/) (CME) initiative aimed at promoting the benefits of hiring qualified People with Disabilities to meet skill shortages. <http://www.businessstakesaction.ca/>

“You’re the only person who can decide where you want to go and how you’re going to get there.” –
Terry Bowden

Full Service Gas Stations in New Brunswick



The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has published a listing of full service gas stations throughout the province on our website. The listing includes those service stations that either provide full service or service upon request. Drivers may obtain assistance when gassing up by either calling ahead or flagging down an attendant by honking. Even though many businesses provide full service at the pump, customers may be required to enter the premises to pay for their purchase. In several cases, full service gas stations have premises which are not wheelchair accessible. Given the prevalence of debit and PIN credit cards this may create some additional challenges. Under no circumstances should anyone ever share their PIN. Consumers may wish to pay for their purchases using cash or request their credit card issuers to validate transactions without having to enter a pin.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this list is accurate and complete. However, the Premier's Council makes no warranty either direct or implied as to either the accuracy or completeness of the list. If any errors are encountered or other full service gas stations exist, we would ask that you share this information with the Council. Either contact us by telephone at (506) 444-3000 in Fredericton or 1 (800) 442-4412 province-wide, or by e-mail at pcsdp@gnb.ca with the words "full service gas stations" in the subject. This will help us ensure that the list of full service establishments throughout the province is as complete and accurate as it can be.

The updated list of full service and service on request establishments is available on our website www.gnb.ca/council.



Happy Holidays!



As we wrap up the 2010 year, the Council members and staff of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons would like to extend warm wishes for a safe and happy holidays. Our office will be closed on December 24th and 27th.

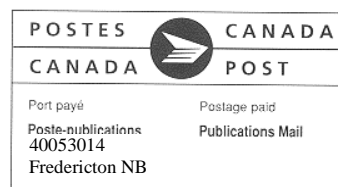
With all the festivities that take place this time of year, we ask everyone to please plan ahead. If you need a ride home this season ask someone to be a designated driver, call a cab, take public transit, walk or call Operation Red Nose. Operation Red Nose is offered in the Fredericton, Oromocto, Moncton, Saint John and Edmundston areas. The program is offered free of charge with the goal to provide partygoers with a safe way to get home if they have been drinking. To get a ride with Operation Red Nose in the Fredericton area, call 443-NOSE (6673) on the designated dates. For more information or to obtain the contact number in your area, please visit <http://www.operationnezrouge.com/en/>.



All the best for 2011!



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We welcome submissions for our newsletter on any topic relative to persons with disabilities. This newsletter can be available in alternate formats. Please circulate the Communiqué within your office and with friends.



NOTICE

The September 2010 edition of the *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* is available. If you wish to receive a copy, please fill out the following and return to our office by fax or mail.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Language: English _____ French _____

Return to: Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
440 King Street, Suite 648, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
Fax: (506) 444-3001 E-mail: pcsdp@gnb.ca

Updates are available upon request throughout the year