



Fall 2010

BOULDER, COLORADO

Profiles

Rider and disability rights advocate:

Dean Colby



Dean Colby has lived with his disability, which requires his use of a wheelchair, since 1993 - only three years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. An adjunct faculty member at CU-Boulder, Dean began working in the School of Journalism in the mid-90s, when the university was still in the early stages of making accommodations for people with disabilities. At that time, the School of Journalism was housed in the nearly 100 year-old Macky Auditorium, which did not have an elevator. Dean keenly experienced the limitations of working in an environment where a portion of the campus was inaccessible because of lack of curb cuts, ramps, and other accommodations.

As Dean recalls the obstacles and frustrations he met in the early years of his disability, he acknowledges that many of those same challenges exist today. Although far more accessible housing has been made available, people with disabilities continue to be limited to nursing homes or residential complexes specifically designed for people who require wheelchair-accessible living accommodations. This clusters people with disabilities and limits inclusion in the larger population.

Dean believes that “the most vital change in anti-discrimination legislation would be to change current regulations on the level of income required to receive Medicaid benefits. People with disabilities are often forced into impoverishment because Medicaid eligibility is regulated by federal poverty level guidelines.” This often results in preventing many people from realizing their career goals and making important contributions to society through their professional work. While Dean may have aspired to a tenure track position at the university, he feels these regulations have constrained him to the lower paying, part-time adjunct faculty position.

Dean Colby gives a strong voice to the changes needed to create equity for all people and to increasing awareness about what it is like to live with a disability.

Equal access



Look out for one another

Choice

The freedom to make our lives what we want



Equal opportunity

Inclusion

Move America forward



Disability rights



Community

A NEWSLETTER OF SPECIAL TRANSIT

Perspectives

This summer I had the good fortune to fulfill a long held desire to travel to the Ukraine, my father’s homeland, where I visited the beautiful cities of Odessa and Kiev as well as many smaller towns and rural villages. The scenery was gorgeous and the people were warm and welcoming, but as our trip progressed, I was acutely aware that something was missing.



Throughout our ten days of travel, I never saw a person using a wheelchair or any other mobility aid. When I asked our guides about this, they told me that few people with disabilities have access to wheelchairs. Accessible transportation is non-existent and there are no accommodations for people with disabilities in public places. Those who are unable to walk stay at home. They do not go shopping, go to restaurants, or go to work. They are invisible.

What a contrast to our own society, where for the past 20 years, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has mandated equal access to public facilities, transportation, and employment for people with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. As we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the ADA this summer, I reflected on the dramatic changes the ADA has brought to America. In this country, individuals with disabilities are no longer as limited in their ability to travel independently. In addition to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities, our society has been enriched by the participation of those who might otherwise be restricted to a life of isolation and invisibility.

For more than thirty years, Special Transit has been providing access to opportunities for full community engagement for people whose mobility is limited by age, income, health condition or disability. Since the passage of the ADA in 1990, Special Transit has expanded services to reach

continued ...

Special Transit’s mission is to promote independence and self-sufficiency for people with limited mobility by providing caring, customer-focused transportation options.

Special Transit is a 501(c)3 private, nonprofit organization.

Your contribution changes lives.



A participating agency

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Boulder, CO 80301

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Milestones

Topping Out: August 4, 2010

Somewhere between groundbreaking and ribbon cutting comes a milestone in the construction of many buildings called “topping out.” It occurs when the highest structural element of the building is about to be swung into place. Often marked by a formal ceremony, the topping out for our new building occurred as the subcontractors and employees of Golden Triangle Construction Company laid the highest beam into place on this hot August day, with a simple wish and a prayer.

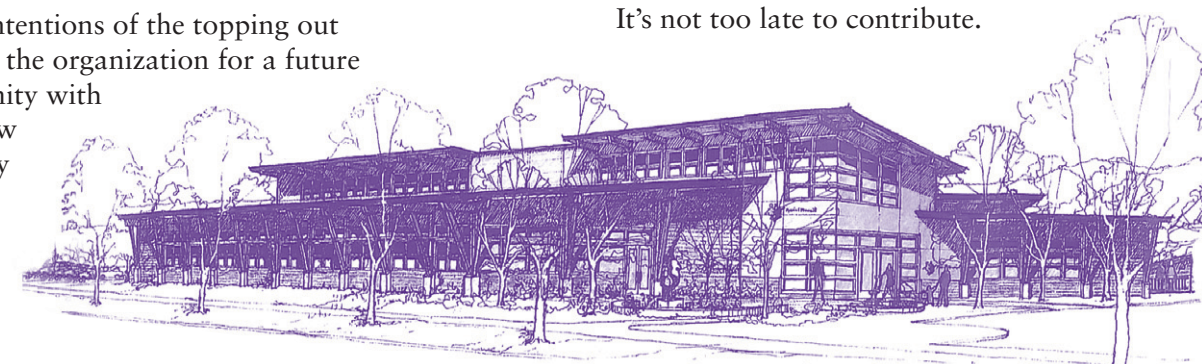


The topping out ceremony is similar to ship naming and launching ceremonies and probably of similar antiquity. While the topping out ceremony has no standard agenda, it is a symbolic gesture to ensure good luck and foster growth and prosperity for the occupants and users of the new building.

intentions with all of the donors, funders, employees, riders, board members, volunteers and potential users of the new Special Transit so as to nurture their own future well-being.

The construction timeline continues to plan for early 2011 completion. It's not too late to contribute.

We gladly embrace the intentions of the topping out ceremony as we position the organization for a future of service to the community with the completion of the new facility. And we willingly share those hopeful



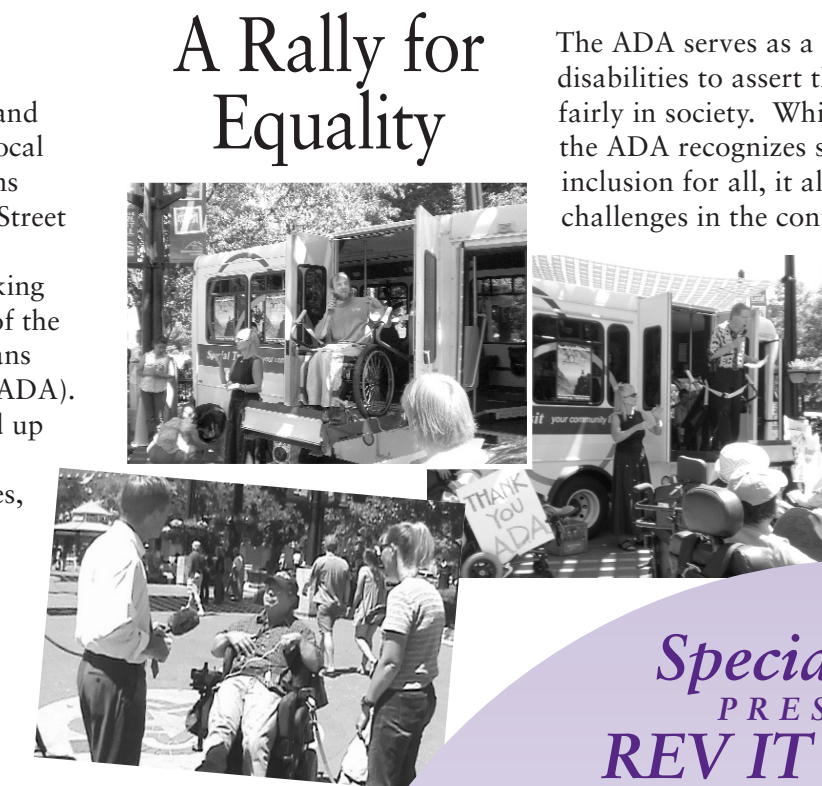
VOTE
Special Transit opposes Amendments 60 and 61 and Proposition 101.
Boulder County Ballot Issue 1A will backfill state funding cuts for essential human services.

“Today, only five percent of the federal workforce is made up of Americans with disabilities, far below the proportion of Americans with disabilities in the general population.”

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

Around the Block

Despite the intense summer heat, many community members and representatives from local nonprofit organizations gathered on the Pearl Street Mall on July 26 for a celebratory rally, marking the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Special Transit teamed up with the Center for People with Disabilities, Imagine!, and the Employment Link to recognize the day and re-energize and empower attendees and the greater community by reminding them what the ADA means to all of us.



A Rally for Equality

The ADA serves as a tool for people with disabilities to assert their rights to be included fairly in society. While the 20th Anniversary of the ADA recognizes significant progress towards inclusion for all, it also reminds us of the challenges in the continued struggle for disability rights.

See the rally for equality on You Tube on www.specialtransit.org

Special Transit PRESENTS REV IT UP! 2010

Sunday, October 3, 2010, 5-8 p.m.
Tebo's Garage, Longmont, CO • \$50 per person

Join us for an enchanting evening filled with the music of The Crystal Swing Band, swing dancing (with lessons), and vintage cars. Enjoy delectables from Colterra, Flagstaff House, Mateo, Radda, SALT, West End Tavern and Zolo Southwestern Grill with your favorite libations. Get in the mood and come wearing stylish 1940s and 1950s attire.

Order tickets online at www.specialtransit.org or by phone at 800-838-3006.

Rider Alert! Buy One Get One Free

If you've ridden Special Transit or used our travel training programs in the past year, you are eligible for one free REV IT UP! ticket for a family member or friend when you buy a ticket for yourself. (Special Transit cannot provide transportation for this event.) Call Esther Concha at 303-447-2848, ext. 147 or econcha@specialtransit.org to secure your tickets.

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...Perspectives continued

more people with disabilities through the access-a-Ride program, the ADA-mandated service the Regional Transportation District is required to fund to ensure equal access for people whose disability prevents their use of the regular fixed route system. And beginning this summer, we are expanding travel training services into Denver to help more people with disabilities learn to access and use RTD buses.

Equal access. Equal opportunity. The freedom to make of our lives what we choose. These are the fundamental principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act. They are not principles that belong to any one group or political party. They are common principles that we cherish as members of a society striving for inclusivity. Special Transit is proud of its role in advancing the principles of the ADA and is committed to continuing efforts to ensure that an individual's mobility impairment does not mean inability to be fully engaged in our community.

Lenna Kottke