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Upcoming Events

In 2009, ORC will be providing compulsory AODA customer service training to all ORC staff and providing training tools for service providers, as ORC prepares its first compliance report to the Accessibility Directorate.

Also in 2009, look out for more presentations and lunch & learns from motivating and inspiring individuals.

Contact Jordan Erasmus at jordan.erasmus@ontariorealty.ca to find out when sessions are running.



Dave Glass shares a moment with

Welcome to the first issue of Building Access, which aims to highlight the Ontario Realty Corporation's (ORC) role in implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As the Province's centre of excellence in real estate, the ORC is committed to being a leader in making the built environment accessible, and this publication is intended to raise awareness, while also providing updates on key ORC initiatives. We hope you enjoy the read!



Defining "Accessibility"

In general terms, "accessibility" is often connected to "universal design" - making the built environment useable in an equitable and dignified manner for all people (with or without a disability). As ORC's CEO Dave Glass sees it, "ORC, as both an employer and a service provider, has a responsibility to improve the accessibility of the built environment we manage. Our customer focus reminds us that buildings and facilities exist solely to accommodate people – they must be welcoming and inclusive for everybody."

ORC Policy Statement

- Working collaboratively to identify and implement solutions that respect the dignity and independence of all individuals;
- Adopting progressive and innovative measures to support Ontario's accessibility legislation
- Enhancing the value of the Government's real estate portfolio through the application of fiscally

accessibility advocate John Draper (above).

Building Projects



As per its "Accessibility Management Framework," ORC is focused on improving the accessibility of government buildings for all people. More recently, ORC, in partnership with its client ministries, have been involved in a number of renovation projects designed to remove barriers for access.

Osgoode Hall Project

Osgoode Hall, which is home to the Supreme Court of Ontario, is one of a number of Ontario government buildings undergoing renovations, which includes a front door access project.

Macdonald Block Complex

For this project, ORC identified the need for accessibility upgrades to 36 elevator cabs in Macdonald Block. Also identified was the need to improve washroom accessibility necessity on the first two floors of the Macdonald Block.

Whitney Block

ORC is involved in the renovation of an existing

responsible strategies to 1) improve the level of accessibility in existing buildings and 2) treat accessibility as a foundational design element in new construction;

- Balancing accessibility, security, conservation, and heritage;
- Aligning all employees, Members of the Board, service providers, and contractors with the ORC's "Centre of Excellence" accessibility planning model;
- Continuously improving ORC's "Centre of Excellence" accessibility planning process

Key ORC Initiatives

- The 2006 Barrier Free Standards for the Design of Ontario Government Facilities are being updated and an audit checklist and application rules for retrofits are being developed. Anticipated training and roll out in early 2009;
- A signage and wayfinding standard is being developed. If you are interested in contributing ideas to this process, please take a moment to complete our questionnaire by clicking [here](#);
- The look, feel and design of the ORC Accessibility Management Framework is currently being finalized for publication in spring 2009;
- A customized Customer Service Training Program is being developed. This is a mandatory program for all staff and any third party service providers or contractors. This training must be completed by January 1, 2010 and we look forward to rolling it out early spring 2009;

Etiquette

The language we use tends to reinforce and perpetuate negative stigmas and stereotypes; some words should be purged from our everyday vocabulary and speech. To learn more about accessibility etiquette, visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca

"handicapped" (or any derivative of it!)

The word "handicapped" stems from the old expression 'cap in hand' and is considered inappropriate for use. The negative connotation is that people with disabilities are charity cases with no marketable skills. It is important that we remember to put the person first, not the disability. The correct and appropriate terminology to use is "a person with a disability", rather than "a handicapped person."

entrance into the Whitney Block, which includes the installation of a new accessible ramp.

For more information on the above projects click [here](#).

"impaired"

The word "impaired" generally implies that something is "broken." Many people tend to use this word incorrectly on a regular basis. For instance, we often hear phrases such as "visually impaired" or "hearing impaired". Phraseology such as "a person with low vision" or a "person who is Deaf" is preferred.

We look forward to hearing your questions and comments. Please contact us at:

accessibility@ontariorealty.ca

Sincerely,
Accessibility Team
Ontario Realty Corporation

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