

More Descriptive Programming

On Sunday, July 1, the landmark provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) requiring the nation's leading networks to provide a combined total of at least 450 hours of described video programming per calendar quarter came to life. Consumers are encouraged to ask their local broadcast stations and cable providers about accessing the described programming. Given that information about which programs are to be described and the means for accessing description can sometimes be difficult to obtain, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has launched a web resource to help consumers navigate program choices, the technical means for accessing description via digital TV and/or cable set top box, and the FCC's complaint process for consumers to use to resolve network, station, or cable provider failure to put described programming in consumers' hands. Visit the FCC's web resource at: <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/video-description>. An independent but more memorable web address can also be used to be directed to the FCC's site; this more user friendly address is: <http://www.VideoDescription.info>.

NAMA Update on Currency

The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) reported that Secretary of the Treasury, Timothy Geithner, submitted a supplemental report on the progress made to provide meaningful access to U.S. currency for blind and other visually impaired persons. Geithner reported that the Department of the Treasury had not yet established a timetable for the next currency redesign, which will include changes approved by the secretary of the treasury. The secretary of the treasury approved the recommendation of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to provide "meaningful

access” to U.S. currency to the blind and visually impaired by:

adding a raised tactile feature, adding large, high-contrast numerals and different colors, and implementing a supplemental currency reader distribution program for blind and other visually impaired U.S. citizens and legal residents. “The news here is that a date for a currency redesign has not been designated – and this is very good news for the vending industry,” said Dan Mathews, executive vice president and chief operating officer of NAMA in a prepared statement. “With our team in Washington, DC, we have been tirelessly advocating on behalf of our members on this case, beginning in September 2005 when we submitted an Amicus Brief in the U.S. District Court (D.C.) and in August 2007 when we submitted a brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals (D.C. Circuit).”

“Some of the original recommendations, including changing the size of currency, could have had a major impact and significant, if not devastating, cost to our industry,” Mathews continued “The requirement that there be a raised tactile feature, continued use of large high contrast numbers and a supplemental currency reader distribution program are all requirements that our industry can live with. Also, the redesign does not apply to \$1 note and will go into effect only when the bills are next scheduled to be redesigned.”

The U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) program is intended to make changes in U.S. currency as mandated earlier by the court to make U.S. currency more usable by blind and other visually impaired persons. The principal plaintiff in the original lawsuit was the American Council of the Blind.