

# *Pipeline . . . direct from the state . . .*

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director

*Pipeline* is published at least twice monthly. Issues are archived at

<http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov/publications/pipeline.htm>

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**Wednesday, January 21, 2009**

**Volume 3, Issue 2**

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**"We must build a world free of unnecessary barriers, stereotypes, and discrimination ... policies must be developed, attitudes must be shaped, and buildings and organizations must be designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to get the education they need and live independently as full citizens in their communities."** – President Barack Obama

Learn more about President Obama's comprehensive agenda to empower individuals with disabilities by visiting <http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/disabilities/>.

## 1. Ohio's Budget Conversations Yield Much to Consider



**We are sharpening our pencils to make the most of scarce financial resources.**

It's a good thing ODMRDD Director John Martin is a highly social person with lots of stamina. The schedule of five 'budget conversations' across the state between January 7 and 15 was a fairly challenging one, given the wintery travel conditions and days ending well after 9 p.m. Ever humble, however, Director Martin simply noted, "I was so pleased to see so many people

attend these meetings to share their ideas and their views, that it was actually more energizing than tiring.”

The overall goal of the budget conversations was to gather input and ideas from a broad spectrum of participants, and consider new ways to approach the challenges ahead. Was this goal achieved? The answer to this question is, “Definitely.” And the follow-up to that is, “Now what?” We’ll answer that here shortly, but first here’s a quick look at one of the budget conversations...

### **A Wintery Evening in Worthington**

*Pipeline* traveled to the budget conversation in Worthington, Ohio, on January 13, which drew approximately 75 participants. ODMRDD, along with collaborative sponsors The Arc, the Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA), the Ohio Assn. of County Boards of MRDD, The League, and the Ohio Assn. of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD, opened this fourth of five meetings across the state with The Arc’s Gary Tonks addressing the audience noting,

**“This is not the time to be silent! We have a member of the Governor’s Cabinet (Director Martin) here – asking for our input – and it’s time to respond to that invitation. Whatever you feel might be worth considering, please say it.”**

ODMRDD’s Family Advocate, Peggy Martin, also reminded the group at the outset,

**“This administration really values its customers – you! The concerns you have for yourselves and for your sons and daughters, are the things we want to hear about. These forums are very important to us, and we thank you for taking the time to participate.”**

Director Martin reviewed a short PowerPoint presentation focusing on the state’s budget and how it is affecting ODMRDD (it’s also posted on the ODMRDD website at [Virtual Budget Forum](#) ) and he discussed the ongoing theme of, “Just getting the work done, no matter how many times we’ve looked at an issue or repeated a function.” He illustrated this theme with “The Porch Screen Story.”



#### **The Porch Screen Story**

Director Martin is known for his engaging stories, and this one’s worth asking him about. Briefly, The Porch Screen Story highlights the repairing of several old porch screens, the need to re-do them almost immediately due to an overly-enthusiastic family dog, and the calm attitude with which his father-in law approached the repetitive work. It certainly spoke to measuring one’s approach to things, including the budget work at-hand.

The meat of the Worthington meeting then involved attendees responding to two questions:

1. What do you see as the most fragile parts of our system?
2. What ways do see that we can save money and be more efficient?

### **Now What?**

Answers and ideas were plentiful, and all were recorded by ODMRDD staff for consolidation following the completion of all budget forums (January 15). The compilation of all ideas is now in process, and input will be carefully reviewed by ODMRDD leadership and collaborating organizations. Next steps will move forward based on this careful review.

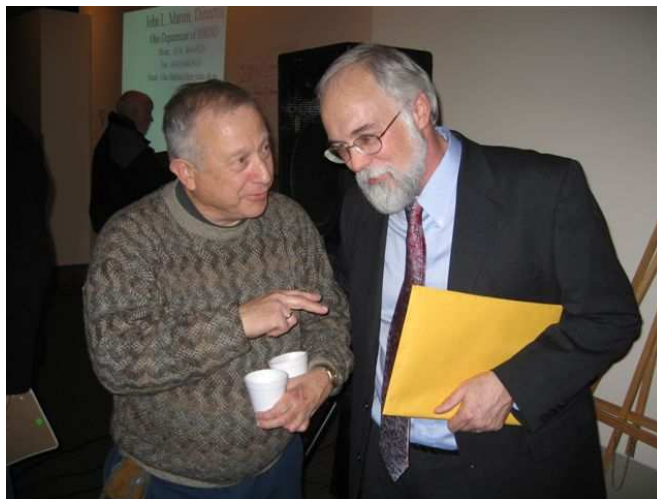
Reflecting upon the Worthington meeting, and the overall budget conversation activity, one might quote Don Short, a Central Ohio parent advocate. He took the microphone more than once to state his ideas and share his experiences, at one point noting,

**“While this budget situation hurts – and it does – we may become stronger for this. I truly believe that. We may become stronger and better for looking at things this way.”**

Beyond the five statewide budget conversations, similar opportunities for input throughout Ohio’s Developmental Center system are being hosted at each Center, focusing on the same information and open format. In addition, the ODMRDD website at [www.mrdd.ohio.gov](http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov) is regularly posting information on its homepage, under the headings, [Virtual Budget Forum](#) and [Budget Information](#).

As Director Martin has stated from the outset, issues concerning the state’s budget continue to challenge all Ohioans ...

**“We are a public entity, and the people served deserve the best listening skills we can offer. This empowers us all, and is what the past few weeks on the road have been very much about.”**



**In Dayton on January 12, the Cox Arboretum & Gardens Metro Park hosted a group of more than 100 participants, including Jack Doub (left), who took a moment for some one-on-one conversation with ODMRDD Director John Martin, and a couple of cups of coffee.**



On January 13, the Holiday Inn Columbus/Worthington hosted nearly 100 participants, including many individuals, direct care providers, and County Board staff.



## Living in the Community

### 2. Facilities Development Training Explains New Options for Housing, Construction and Newly-Purchased Homes

*ODMRDD's Facilities Development staff manage the Department's Community Capital Assistance program, through which money is provided to counties and non-profit agencies to be used for the purchase, construction and/or renovation of homes, Early Childhood Centers, and Adult Services facilities. They also are responsible for leases, easements, and property disposition. Additionally, the group plans, develops, and oversees the agency's Developmental Center capital projects, ensuring an efficient and cost-effective use of the Department's Capital Funds.*

#### **More than Forms, Opportunities Knock**

ODMRDD Facilities Development staff last week presented an overview of the application processes for purchasing homes with Community Capital Assistance (CCA) funding. Leading the training was the Facilities Development team of John Sommer, Steve Matas, and Robert Arey. While it may be no surprise that there are many forms to be completed in the process of constructing or obtaining housing for people in the MRDD community, the main goal was to highlight some of the new opportunities available, provide updated information, and answer questions posed by the more than 40 attendees.

**Most of the training concentrated on New Housing Construction, since CCA funds are available for new construction for the first time beginning with the 2009-10 capital budget.**

The three application processes are:

- Housing Purchase (existing homes);

- Newly Constructed Homes (not built by a housing corporation, never occupied, on the market for at least six months); and,
- New Housing Construction (built by a housing corporation).

### **2009-10 Capital Budget Funding Overview**

The 2009-10 capital budget dollars were appropriated in May 2008 and are currently being disbursed by ODMRDD. The total available funding for Facilities Development in the capital budget – which also covers early child care and senior services – was \$13 million.

Allocation of these capital budget dollars by Facilities Development is as follows:

- 55 homes acquired – Facilities Development received more than 165 requests for new acquisitions in 2009-10.
- 307 Residential Renovation Projects (RRP's) funded – These funds are intended for capital projects in housing owned by nonprofit housing corporations originally purchased with CCA funds. These projects were funded at \$10,000 each. Facilities Development was able to fund 100% of the applications for eligible properties.
- 96 Residential Handicap Accessibility Projects (RHAPs) funded – These funds are intended for projects that will increase accessibility for any home owned by nonprofit housing corporations that house four or fewer individuals, regardless of the source of funds for purchase. These projects were funded at \$10,000 each. Facilities Development was able to fund 100% of the applications for eligible properties.
- Also, 25 sprinkler systems have been allocated for new construction or newly-constructed homes.

In preparation for the 2011-12 capital budget, which will be passed in spring/summer 2010, housing corporations will be given information by Facilities Development to complete Letters of Intent in June 2009.

Briefly, the training overview defined and described the following:

#### **Housing Purchase (existing homes)**

"Housing Purchase," the simplest of the three processes, refers to homes that were built by someone other than the housing corporation and are being acquired for use as rental property for individuals in the MRDD system.

#### **Newly-Constructed Homes**

"Newly Constructed Homes" refers to homes that were built by someone other than the housing corporation and have never been occupied. A new rule, to take effect in mid-February 2009, eliminates a former 'six months on-the-market' limitation, stipulating simply that the home not have been occupied since construction was completed.

#### **New Housing Construction**

"New Housing Construction" refers to homes that are being built and will be owned by the nonprofit housing corporation. Of the three processes, this is the most complicated, and incorporates the most restrictions. Facilities Development staff reviewed many of the new rules that will be in effect for using CCA funds for new housing construction. Two areas, in particular, were topics of conversation during the training:

- *Environmental Review* – The rules require that a full environmental review and assessment be completed prior to construction.
- *Appraisal* – The rules require that there be an appraisal of the property prior to payment for the home construction, and that ODMRDD will not make payment if the cost of the construction is more than 110% of the appraisal.



Some housing corporation staff stated that the appraisal requirement could be problematic because additional elements in accessible homes (certain plumbing, additional safety features, wider door frames, larger doors, etc.) not only increase costs but may not necessarily register as ‘higher quality’ with the appraiser. In addition, housing corporations often build in lower-cost neighborhoods which could be reflected in the appraisal.

**The appraisal discussion underscored the need to work with appraisers to incorporate the full cost of the construction elements into their appraisal.**

Printed materials, including forms, were distributed at the meeting, and are available through ODMRDD Facilities Development. Contact John Sommer at [John.Sommer@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:John.Sommer@dmr.state.oh.us). Facilities Management will be hosting another similar training in 4-6 weeks, reviewing the same material covered this month.

*Acknowledgements, and special thanks for information contained in this article, to  
Steve Farrell, Executive Director, Disability Housing Network,  
8 E. Broad St., Suite 1001, Columbus, OH 43215  
614.586.5855 [www.DisabilityHousingNetwork.org](http://www.DisabilityHousingNetwork.org)*



### **3. People First of Ohio, Annual Meeting March 7, 2009**

*You do not have to have a People First chapter in your area, or be a member, to attend this meeting. According to organizers, it is about advocacy and training and if you are interested you may attend.*

**“YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE, YOUR LIFE”**

**Saturday, March 7, 2009**

**Where: Robert’s Convention Center  
123 Gano Road  
Wilmington, Ohio 45177**

**Registration: 9:00 a.m.**  
**Meeting begins: 10:00 a.m.**  
**Adjournment: 5:00 p.m.**

Guest Speaker, Ollie Cantos, is Special Council to the Assistant Attorney General in Washington D.C., Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. He will address issues involving advocacy in today's environment. The meeting also will include the election of new Board Members.

Event cost is \$15.00 per person, and includes a pizza buffet, salad, dessert, and beverage. A dance will directly follow the annual meeting, training, and elections.

Click the file below for a registration form. Return to the address indicated by February 15, 2009



People First of Ohio  
Annual Meetin1 regist

*For more information, contact Rhonda at (740) 397-6100.*



## **4. Solidarity 2009 Celebrates 10th Anniversary, April 14-16**

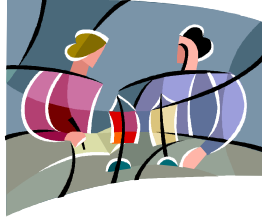
*Solidarity 2009*, billed as, 'Ohio's leading conference by and for people with disabilities' returns April 14 -16, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus. The tenth anniversary celebration will continue *Solidarity's* tradition of bringing vital information to people with disabilities so that they, their friends and families, may be more aware of -- and better advocates for -- issues important to the disability community.

Governor Ted Strickland is scheduled to address the *Solidarity* attendees, as well as:

- Joyce Bender, host of "*Disability Matters*," the internationally-acclaimed radio program about employing and empowering people with disabilities;
- Matt Roloff, star of The Learning Channel's "*Little People, Big World*"; and,
- Actor Chris Burke and *The Chris Burke Band*

*Solidarity 2009* also will include legislative training, and more than 30 practical workshops. According to Dayton resident, Shari Cooper, Ms. Wheelchair Ohio 2008,

**"Solidarity is well organized, and one of the best tools for people with disabilities to network, and help them to become employed, tax-paying citizens."**



Workshop topics will include:

- Employment;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Service animals and the law;
- Medicaid Buy-In;
- Getting out the vote;
- Obtaining assistive technology;
- Dealing with depression, and much more.

Vendor displays and a Health and Wellness Fair also will give participants an opportunity to try out the newest technology, and receive health screenings.

Solidarity '09 sponsors include ODMRDD, the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, Buckeye Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Invacare, Ohio Legal Rights Service, and others.

The conference fee, \$175, includes three days of workshops and activities, a meal each day, snacks, and entertainment. Scholarships covering the conference fee are available to eligible people with disabilities on a first-request basis. Registration materials are available at [www.dnos.org](http://www.dnos.org) or, see below:

*Solidarity is a project of the Disability Network of Ohio—Solidarity, Inc.  
Sue Willis, Conference Manager  
249 E. Cooke Rd., Columbus, OH 43214  
(614) 262-8124  
axiscenter@aol.com*



SOLIDARITY reg  
bk.doc



## **5. MRDD Awareness Month, March** **Annual Kickoff Event Gearing Up with Statewide Support**

The beautiful Ohio Statehouse Atrium will again host the annual *MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event* in Columbus, March 5, 2009, from 10 a.m. - noon. The ODMRDD and Ohio

Public Images (OPI), in collaboration with other statewide organizations, will host the event spotlighting Ohioans with disabilities who are exploring and developing opportunities for success in their communities.

Included will be groups of self-advocates and organizations representing ideas in action from across the state. In addition to a short structured program, attendees to this free public event also are encouraged to take time to tour the Statehouse and meet their legislators.

**While the program is not yet complete, Governor Ted Strickland has been invited to attend, as will legislators with a specific interest in the MRDD community.**

Space for information/display tables to promote positive opportunities for people with disabilities will be available, but is limited. Contact ODMRDD Public Information Officer, Sherry Steinman, at (614) 644-0262, or email [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us). Tables will be assigned on a first-come/first served basis.

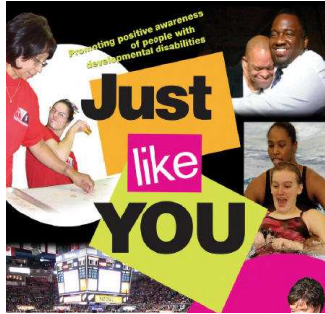
**Sharing Ideas from Belmont County this year will be representatives of The Freedom Readers...**



**The Freedom Readers: Read more about them in the *Pipeline Quarterly* archive at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/publications/quarterly/2008/PQFinal2008.pdf>**

Front (l-r): Tim Rutter, Amber DeVienzio, Annette Ponsetti, Brad Stephens, Greg Hocking. Back: Willie Jones, Darlene Pempek, Brea Holstein, Tommie Lindell, Brad George, Mike Parkinson, and Erik Keylor.  
(Shown at PAR conference, Oct. '08)

Visit the Ohio Public Images website at [www.publicimagesnetwork.org](http://www.publicimagesnetwork.org) for materials supporting this year's for MRDD Awareness Month theme, "Just Like You."



### **Toll-Free Hotline**

### **ODMRDD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)**

The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



**1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**

### ***Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...***

*Questions? Comments?* *Pipeline* is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about *Pipeline* at [feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us](mailto:feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us), or contact Sherry Steinman at [sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us), phone (614) 644-0262.

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