

ONTARIO KICKS OFF NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK*McGuinty Government Breaking Down Barriers For People With Disabilities***NEWS**

May 26, 2008

As part of its commitment to break down barriers for people with disabilities, Ontario is celebrating the launch of National Access Awareness Week, May 26 – June 1, 2008.

People with disabilities face daily barriers that prevent them from working, enjoying and participating in their communities. Each year, National Access Awareness Week encourages Canadians to think about the [barriers](#) people with disabilities face, and to find ways to break them down.

Under its landmark [accessibility legislation](#), Ontario is making progress toward its goal of becoming an accessible province for people with disabilities by 2025. Ontario's first [accessibility standard](#) – for [customer service](#) – is already in force, and new standards are in development for:

- Transportation
- Information and communication
- Employment
- Buildings and other structures.

Across Ontario, businesses and communities are already finding ways to make themselves more accessible to people with disabilities. For example, the Royal Bank of Canada has made accessibility a priority by tailoring its services to meet the individual needs of customers with disabilities. Accessibility is also built into all new branches, with barrier-free access, lighting and teller desks.

QUOTES

“Accessibility is good for our economy and our society. It means a bigger talent pool for Ontario's workforce, more customers for our businesses and communities that include people of all abilities,” said [Community and Social Services Minister Madeleine Meilleur](#).

“National Access Awareness Week is the perfect opportunity to reflect on current accessibility issues in Ontario and focus on what we can all do to ensure an inclusive and barrier-free community,” said Mark Galbraith, RBC Royal Bank, Regional Vice President, Downtown Core.

QUICK FACTS

- Today, 15.5 per cent of Ontarians have a disability. This number will grow as the population ages.
- Between 2001 and 2006, Ontario's population grew by about seven per cent, while the number of people with disabilities increased by 22 per cent.
- People with disabilities have an estimated spending power of about \$25 billion annually across Canada.

LEARN MORE

Find out [how to serve customers with disabilities](#).

Learn more about why accessibility is [good for your business](#).

Julia Sakas, Minister's Office, 416 325-5219
Erika Botond, Media Office, 416 325-5760

ontario.ca/community-news
Disponible en français