

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nancy Starnes (202) 955-6326

Starnes@nod.org

NOD Announces Finalists for Accessible America Awards
Winning Disability Friendly Community to be Named on January 7

WASHINGTON, D.C., DECEMBER 4, 2007-The National Organization on Disability (NOD) today announced that nine communities have been selected as finalists in its 2007 Accessible America Competition: Alexandria, VA; Bloomington, IN; Columbus, GA; Hattiesburg, MS; Houston, TX; Indianapolis, IN; Miami-Dade County, FL; New Haven, CT; and Sioux Falls, SD.

An independent, five-member judging panel of distinguished disability advocates and professionals from across the United States will select the winners, with results to be announced January 7, 2007.

A \$25,000 cash prize will be awarded to the national winner. The Award is sponsored in recognition of NOD's 25th anniversary year by generous grants from AARP, UPS, and the Chrysler Foundation. NOD's Community Partnership Program administers the competition to recognize and promote progress toward comprehensive accessibility and opportunity in U.S. cities and towns. The money encourages further advancement of local disability-related efforts.

"All communities that entered this contest are recognized leaders, because they have made a serious commitment to serving residents who have disabilities," said NOD President Michael R. Deland. "Population trends point to an increase in the number of people with disabilities who will surely look to community resources that support their independence and dignity." NOD Vice President Nancy Starnes added, "These finalist communities will inspire many thousands of others across the country to replicate ideas about how to accomplish the full and equal participation of people with disabilities."

All U.S. cities, towns and counties were eligible to enter the competition which recognizes communities that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to offering citizens with disabilities full and equal opportunities to participate in the life of their community, including access to jobs, education, religious worship, voting, transportation, housing, emergency preparedness and the entire range of social, recreational, cultural, and sports activities. The finalist applications are posted on NOD's website at www.nod.org to encourage replication of best practices by communities across the country.

Previous Accessible America Award winners include Berkeley, CA, Cambridge, MA, Pasadena, CA, Phoenix, AZ, Irvine, CA and Venice, FL.

The National Organization on Disability, founded in 1982, promotes the full and equal participation and contribution of America's 54 million men, women and children with disabilities in all aspects of life. For more information about NOD's programs, including how communities can join the Community Partnership Program, visit www.nod.org.