



Connecticut Network

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News Release

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Democracy and Opportunity for All: CT-N Managers win Connect-Ability Top Employer Award

Hartford, CT – The term “accessibility” has a variety of definitions, and the Connecticut Network is committed to more than just making state government more accessible. At the 2011 Connect-Ability Employment Summit on Thursday, the Connecticut Public Affairs Network – the nonprofit manager of CT-N – received a Top Employer Award for its dedication and creativity in recruiting disabled employees. This honor specifically acknowledges CPAN’s efforts to retain visually-impaired workers for the creation of CT-N’s closed captioning for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In 2009, CPAN began working with the Board of Education Services for the Blind to identify potential closed captioning technicians for CT-N. The network’s voice-recognition-based captioning system doesn’t require 20/20 vision, but does demand a vocal command and acute listening skills that not everyone possesses. BESB identified its first ideal candidate in short order, and what began as a single part-time position has now become two full-time positions – half of the regular captioning staff – filled by low-visioned technicians.

“The core mission of our organization focuses on removing barriers to accessibility. The progression in this case has gone from CT-N working to make government more accessible to everyone, to making CT-N itself more accessible to the Deaf community through closed captioning, to mirroring that same accessibility in our hiring. The result is that members of one differently-abled community now help us to better serve another differently-abled community.” according to Paul Giguere, CPAN President & CEO. “We take pride in finding the best people for the job, and we’re very grateful to Connect-Ability for this recognition.”

The Connect-Ability Top Employer Awards recognizes Connecticut companies for their leadership and accomplishment in recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities. Past recipients have included Aetna, Advo, Deloitte, IBM, Northeast Utilities, Pfizer, Mohegan Sun, and Travelers’ Insurance. The 2011 awards were presented at the Connect-ability’s Employment Summit at the Connecticut Convention Center on June 16th.

Connect-Ability began in late 2005 with a federal grant to the State of Connecticut to identify and remove barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities. This five-year, multimillion dollar systems change grant involved a detailed look at the State’s employment and disability

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services infrastructure in order to identify problem areas and implement lasting solutions.

Connect-Ability has two primary customers: Employers of all sizes and in all industries who are seeking qualified workers, and people with disabilities of all ages who are seeking employment for the first time or who want a new challenge.

The Connecticut Public Affairs Network has been committed to strengthening civic engagement in the Constitution State by providing comprehensive and unbiased educational programming and outreach on state government, civics and citizenship since the organization's founding in 1997. CPAN's major initiatives include the creation and management of CT-N since 1999, and educational and community programming at Connecticut's Old State House since 2008

Winner of the national Sunshine Award from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Open Government Award from the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government, Connecticut Network is the state's source for complete and balanced television and webcast coverage of state government and public affairs. For more information, become a fan of CT-N on Facebook, follow the network at www.twitter.com/CTNetworkTV or visit CT-N's website at www.ct-n.com.

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