



Sean Parnell, Governor
State of Alaska

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Governor's Council employee wins national leadership award

Advocate improved rural independent living opportunities in Alaska, nationwide

ANCHORAGE — Patrick Reinhart has advocated for Alaskans with disabilities for 24 years, working to provide them with the means to live independently in rural areas. He recently received the national Earl Walden Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rural Advocacy for advancing rural independent living, not just in Alaska but nationally.

Reinhart is a program coordinator with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. The award, given by the national Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, recognizes his leadership in three areas.

- Reinhart led advocacy efforts to bring more transportation funding to Alaska and rural areas nationwide in the last reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. Alaska's annual rural transit funding rose to more than \$5 million from less than \$500,000. As a result, there are several new transit systems in small communities statewide, benefiting Alaskans with disabilities, seniors and other groups who depend on public transit.
- Reinhart worked with Alaska's congressional delegation to obtain more than \$1.4 million in funding for the state's independent living programs, expanding outreach to rural and very remote areas of Alaska, and ensuring the funding went to improve services there.
- Reinhart was the executive director of the Statewide Independent Living Council when in 2004 that agency received the U.S. Administration on Aging grant for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs). As the managing grant partner for Alaska, he advocated for the "D" in ADRC to be meaningful in all states. As a board member of the National Council on Independent Living, he connected that agency with the Administration on Aging, resulting in a national meeting between the agencies and several \$100,000 grants to the national council over the years.

"Overall, Patrick's advocacy both in Alaska and nationally," wrote the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, "has led to increased and improved opportunities for rural independent living consumers."

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