

# ◆ THE DERBY CITY NSCIA NEWSLETTER ◆

OCTOBER 2011

*The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Network- Serving Kentuckiana.*

## Message From the President

*Dear Members & Friends-*

*In lieu of our October meeting, we had our annual picnic at Camp Crooked Creek on October 2.*

*We will NOT have a meeting in November.*

*Our holiday party will take place the fourth Monday in December. If this changes, we will let you know. More details on the holiday party in next month's issue.*

*Remember that next month is election day in Kentucky as we are voting for Governor. Please see the box on page four for information on important deadlines for registering if you have not already; for applying for absentee ballots and for returning those absentee ballots.*

*- David Allgood*



*All articles from the Internet –editor*

## **FIRST FACTORY-BUILT WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE HITS THE MARKET**

**By Michelle Koueiter**

Before Wednesday, the only wheelchair accessible vehicles available to the public were aftermarket conversions that generally came with structural changes and a price tag ranging from \$50,000 to \$80,000.

Now, a startup company called the Vehicle Production Group (VPG) has released the first vehicle specifically assembled to accommodate people in wheelchairs, with an MSRP of \$39,950.

The vehicle is called the MV-1, which stands for Mobility Vehicle 1, and it was built for the disabled community.

VPG is manufacturing the VP-1 out of the AM General plant (R.I.P. Hummer) at 12—soon to be 20—units per day. Production is sold out for this year, and the vehicle is already available through 41 U.S. dealers. That number is expected to grow to 60-80 within the next few months.

At Wednesday's launch event in Indiana, the first MV-1 was handed over to Marc Buoniconti, a former Citadel football player who was paralyzed from the neck down more than 25 years ago.

Of the MV-1, Buoniconti remarked, "It's not an afterthought," unlike converted products from other manufacturers.

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# **Refrigerator Calendar**

## **2011**

### **OCTOBER**

**3rd  
Mon**            **Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting**  
**1:00; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.**

**2nd  
Mon**            **Derby City Chapter-National Spinal Cord Injury Association; 6:00 p.m.**  
**220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, KY 40202; 10th floor dining room**  
**NO MEETING THIS MONTH. PICNIC WAS OCT 2.**

**23rd  
Mon**            **Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.**  
**Spalding University; 845 S. Third Street; Louisville .**

### **NOVEMBER**

**7th  
Mon**            **Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting**  
**1:00 p.m.; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.**

**8th**            **Election Day.**

**21st  
Mon**            **Derby City Chapter-National Spinal Cord Injury Association; 6:00 p.m.**  
**220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, KY 40202; 10th floor dining room.**  
**NO MEETING THIS MONTH.**

**28th  
Mon**            **Metro disability Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.**  
**Spalding University; 845 S. Third Street; Louisville.**

**For More Information Call**  
**David Allgood at 502-588-8574**

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**Derby City Area Chapter**  
*of the*  
**National Spinal Cord Injury Association**

**ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

The Derby City Area Chapter of the N.S.C.I.A. is a membership organization for individuals with spinal cord injuries, their families, and health professionals. Founded in 1984 as a Charter Member of the N.S.C.I.A., it was incorporated under IRS Section 501 (c) 3 as a not for profit organization. The Board of Directors consists of the Officers, Past President and the Board Members At Large.

\*\*\*

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Visit Our Website at  
[www.DerbyCitySpinalCord.org](http://www.DerbyCitySpinalCord.org)

**The Derby City Area Chapter Newsletter is brought to  
you through the generous support of Frazier  
Rehab Institute**

**FACTORY-BUILT ACCESSIBLE VAN CONT'D**

VPG Chairman Fred Drasner said that the company saw the MV-1 as a needs-based product: Currently 10 million Americans use an ambulatory aid; 4 million are in wheelchairs; and 54 million are disabled. Those numbers are expected to rise as the baby boom generation ages.

VPG expects 12,000 copies of the MV-1 to be produced next year, and 25,000 to be produced the year after. The company already has 4,000 standing orders.

Considering the market, competition is expected to be fierce. For example, Vantage Mobility International has been producing minivan conversion vehicles for two decades, and CEO Doug Eaton says that consumers have been satisfied with their products. "Our track record proves that they are safe, fuel efficient and offer innovative features that people really want," Eaton said. "We welcome a comparison test."

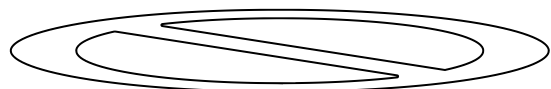
According to VPG, the MV-1 offers more headroom and a bigger door opening than any conversion vehicle available. It has an integrated ramp and step-in feature and it can accommodate four people in wheelchairs, plus four other adults along with luggage.

As part of the purpose-built appeal, VPG also claims the MV-1 is safer and more durable than converted vehicles, which generally do not meet NHSTA standards, traditionally have been. The MV-1 was built to comply with those standards, and it also comes with a 5-year, 75,000 mile, new-vehicle warranty.

Power for the MV-1 is supplied by a Ford 4.6 liter V8 engine capable of running on either gasoline (for 15 mpg combined) or compressed natural gas (for 13.5 mpg). On our brief test drive, the MV-1 proved to be comfortable and powerful thanks to a rear-wheel drive and 248 hp.

The base MV-1 SE starts at \$39,950, which includes antilock brakes and stability control, a deployable manual ramp with anti-slip surface treatment on the flooring, a wheelchair-restraint track system and a six-way adjustable driver's seat.

The upgraded DX goes for \$41,950 and adds a telescoping power ramp with lighting, rear window wiper, cruise control and a cargo-area floor trim package. Both trims available in black, white, silver, red or dark blue. A factory-installed compressed natural gas system is optional for both models. Visit [www.vpgautos.com](http://www.vpgautos.com) for more information.



### NEW CLASS OF STEM CELL-LIKE CELLS DISCOVERED IN SPINAL CORD OFFERS POSSIBILITIES FOR SPINAL CORD REPAIR

The Allen Institute for Brain Science announced on Sept 15 the discovery of a new class of cells in the spinal cord that act like neural stem cells, offering a fresh avenue in the search for therapies to treat spinal cord injury and disease. The published collaborative study, authored by scientists from the University of British Columbia, the Allen Institute for Brain Science and the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital at Mc Gill University and titled, "Adult Spinal Cord Radial Glia Display a Unique Progenitor Phenotype," appears in the open access journal PLoS One.

The research team utilized the Allen Spinal Cord Atlas, a finely detailed genome-wide map of gene expression throughout the mouse spinal cord, to compare the genes expressed, or turned on, in adult spinal cord radial glia with those found in other neural stem cells.

The nervous system has historically thought to be incapable of repairing itself, as the cells used to create it are exhausted during development. With the identification of these new stem cell-like cells, it may be possible to activate a certain set of genes in order to encourage those cells to reconstruct a damaged network in the adult spinal cord.

"By using the Allen Spinal Cord Atlas we were able to discover a brand new cell type that has previously been overlooked and could be an important player in all manner of spinal cord injury and disease, including multiple sclerosis and ALS," said Jane Roskams, Ph.D., neuroscientist at the University of British Columbia and senior author of the study.

From disabled veterans to those affected with Lou Gherig's disease (ALS) or Spinal Muscular Atrophy, spinal cord related diseases and disorders affect people of all ages including nearly one-quarter of a million Americans who have suffered from a spinal cord injury; as many as 30,000 Americans who suffer from ALS at any given time; and approximately 2.5 million people worldwide who suffer from multiple sclerosis.

"This is a tremendous example of how our public atlas resources can lead to critical discoveries that offer promising avenues for developing much needed new clinical therapies," said Allen Jones, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of the Allen Institute.

Dr. Roskams, who led the collaborative research team, has said that it is possible this pool of cells was overlooked because of its unusual location and because scientists have been working with limited information. With the availability of the public, online Allen Spinal Cord Atlas, the information accessible to researchers has vastly increased.

In the search for neural stem cells scientists have been

using a few known genes as clues to find candidates deep in the middle of the spinal cord. While some neural stem cells have been discovered there, the newly identified class of spinal cord radial glia run along the edge of the spinal cord, an incredibly convenient location for activating them with minimal secondary damage to help the spinal cord repair after injury or during disease.

"When we first saw known neural gene cells appearing in these cells on the edge of the cord, I realized we not only had a brand new cell, but had the capacity to reveal a new gene set that may also guide us to hidden neural stem cells in atypical locations in the brain. I did not expect so many of them to link to human diseases," Dr. Roskams said.

Identifying these cells and the genes relevant to activate them opens fresh new pathways to explore effective therapies to treat spinal cord injury and several types of neurodegenerative diseases.

The Allen Spinal Cord Atlas, part of the suite of Allen Brain Atlas resources, is freely available online at [www.brain-map.org](http://www.brain-map.org).

The Allen Spinal Cord Atlas was made possible by a unique funding consortium comprising public and private entities including the ALS Association, PVA Research Foundation, Wyeth Research, PEMCO Insurance, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, International Spinal Research Trust and philanthropist and Institute founder Paul G. Allen, as well as numerous anonymous donors.

### KY GOVERNOR ELECTION 2011

- **10 /11/11:** Last day to register to vote for 2011 General Election.
- **11/1/11:** Deadline to apply for mail-in absentee ballots for 2011 General Election. Application **MUST** be received in County Clerk's office at closing on this day.
- **11/8/11: Election Day.** Mail-in absentee ballots must be received by 6 p.m. local time on this day.
- Additional voter information can be found at <http://elect.ky.gov/>. Call Protection & Advocacy's voter hotline at **1-800-372-2988** between 6 a.m.-6 p.m. if you have problems casting your vote.

**PLEASE VOTE AND LET YOUR  
VOICES BE HEARD!!**

## COMPANY INCREASES WHEELCHAIR USER INDEPENDENCE BY REINVENTING WHEEL

Common wisdom states you shouldn't waste time reinventing the wheel. "But what if reinventing the wheel could have a significant impact on someone's independence?" When the Product Development Team at Maddak, Inc., manufacturer of Aids for Daily Living, considered that question and realized the answer was a resounding yes, they knew they had to take on the commercial development of the first ever foldable wheelchair wheel. Kathleen Hanek, Director of Product Development, tells us, "Among other things, a foldable wheelchair wheel will allow wheelchair users to get their wheelchair and wheels in and out of the car with greater ease, to pack an extra set of wheels in a suitcase when travelling, and to potentially even keep their wheelchairs inside the cabin of the plane instead of in stowage. In other words, just like all Maddak products, a foldable wheel has the ability to increase the users independence while making life a little easier."

Originally conceptualized by Duncan Fitzsimmons, a graduate of the Royal College of Arts in London, England, Maddak licensed the worldwide manufacturing and distribution rights to the patent pending foldable wheel in February 2011. The folding feature of the wheel sets it apart from all other wheels on the market, including high end wheelchair wheels. After the wheel is disconnected from the frame it can be folded into a compact form for easy transport or storage. "Wheelchair users will no longer be constrained to a certain car/van based on the ease of transferring the wheelchairs and the wheels into the car anymore. And, they'll be able to travel in other people's cars with greater ease," declares Hanek.

Maddak has a long history of serving the disability community," states Hanek, "and we are excited to be working with Duncan on bringing such a useful and valuable product like the foldable wheelchair wheel to market. We have done extensive research and have been tapping into the thoughts, insights and needs of the wheelchair community to gain knowledge about their current wheels, features that are important to them and unfulfilled needs."

An email survey conducted by Maddak and sent to readers of New Mobility magazine revealed that 80% of participants either 1) thought the foldable wheel would make their lives much easier or 2) were interested in learning more about the concept. In a focused group 100% of participants said that a foldable wheel would have a positive impact in their life. And in a later series of focus groups that included caregivers and service providers as well as wheelchair users, 76% responded

**(Continued Beneath For Sale)**

## FOR SALE \*\*\*

**\*1995 Ford E-150 conversion van.** Side wheelchair lift; power adjustable driver transfer seat. Hand controls. Excellent mechanical condition; 63,357 miles. Body & tires in nice condition. \$8500.00; Call Tony at 502-526-6263 or Tom at 502-262-3576.

\*\*\*If assistance is needed to pay for any items **ABOVE** in *For Sale* contact KY Assistive Technology Loan Corporation at 1-800-327-5287 for information on 5% interest loans to qualified individuals.

**\*Cookbooks for Sale:** Recipes compiled by Chapter members; \$10:00. Call David @ 585-8574.

**\*Video tapes for sale.** Various topics related to spinal cord injuries. Call David Allgood at 588-8574.

♦ **SCI -Shirts for sale.** S, M, L, XL. David—588-8574.

***IF YOU HAVE ITEMS FOR SALE,  
PLEASE CONTACT DAVID  
AT 588-8574 OR EMAIL BARB DAVIS  
AT davis.barbara33@gmail.com***

### REINVENTING THE WHEEL, CONT'D

"The feedback we are receiving from the wheelchair community is invaluable," says Hanek. "We are still in the design stage and the concerns and suggestions brought up during the focus groups are being addressed so that when we launch the wheel in September 2013 it is as user friendly as possible."

For more information on this and other disability user-friendly products visit [www.maddak.com](http://www.maddak.com)



*You are cordially invited to join us!*

*The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association consists of people with spinal cord injuries and similar physical conditions, their family members, friends, and professionals or other interested parties.*

*We meet:*

*WHEN- Third Monday of every month from 6:30 to 9:00 PM*

*WHERE- Frazier Rehab Institute, 10th floor Dining Room  
220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, KY 40202*

**If you wish to be a member, donor, and/or be on the mailing list of the Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association please complete and mail the following form to the address below**

**National Spinal Cord Injury Association**

**Derby City Chapter**

**Membership & Organization Sponsorship Form**

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt.# \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business (if any): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Para: \_\_\_\_\_ Quad \_\_\_\_\_ Hemiplegic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Level of Disability \_\_\_\_\_ Other Disability \_\_\_\_\_  
 Able-Bodied (yes/no): \_\_\_\_\_  
 New Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Subscription  
 (only \$12): \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests /Hobbies/Sports: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*

Membership is open to all individuals and sponsorship to all organizations interested in spinal cord injury.

Mark Type of TAX DEDUCTIBLE Individual Membership or Organization Donor Category Desired\*\*\*

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Regular-\$12                 | _____ Bronze Organization-\$100-249        |
| _____ Sponsor-\$25                 | _____ Silver Organization-\$250-499        |
| _____ Patron \$50                  | _____ Gold Organization- \$500-999         |
| _____ Benefactor-\$100             | _____ Platinum Organization-\$1000-2499    |
| _____ Permanent- \$1000/lifetime** | _____ Diamond Organization-\$2500 Or Over. |

Please make checks payable to: **NSCIA Derby City Chapter**

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