

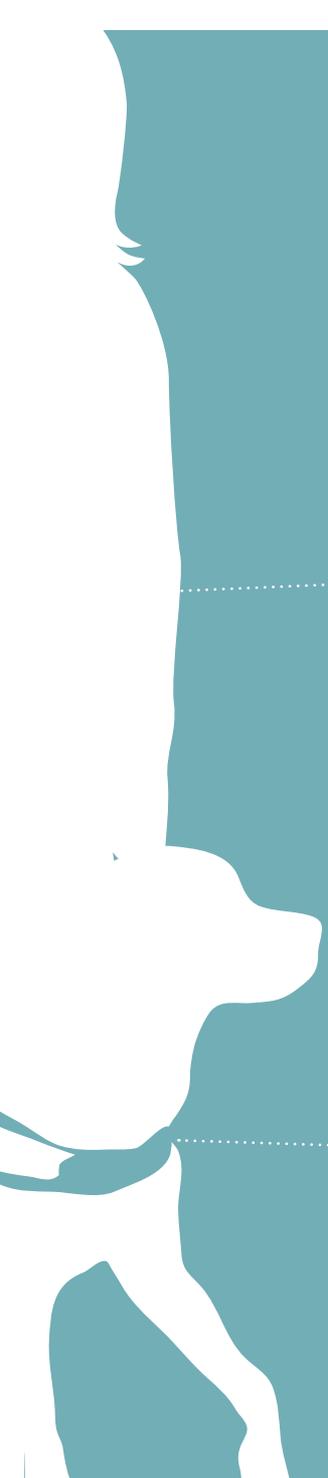
STATE BOARD OF GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

[re]view 2011

by ANTONETTE SORRICK, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

guide dog board





STATE BOARD OF GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

PRESIDENT: Eric Holm

VICE PRESIDENT: Tom Scott

SECRETARY: Joe Xavier

BOARD MEMBERS: Belinda Barragan, Jeff Neidich, Larry Grable, Frank Welte

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2011

2011 was a busy and productive year for the State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

The Board held four meetings and five committee/task force meetings; updated resource materials, including tips to prevent and address dog attacks on guide dogs; and held an informational meeting regarding changes to Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In 2011, we celebrate the Board's accomplishments and regret to see a couple of departures. Board member Frank Welte completed his term, and Executive Assistant Cenne Jackson was recently hired by the California Energy Commission. Many thanks to both Frank and Cenne for all their hard work and dedication.

Here is a **brief look at** our activities in **2011**.

“ In 2011, the Board ratified a comprehensive communications plan. This plan will guide the Board to efficiently utilize resources to provide outreach and education on such important issues as how to respond to a dog attack on a guide dog and accessibility rights under new Federal laws. ”

—**Joe Xavier**, Chair
Outreach and Education
Committee

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Board members and staff attended the following conferences:

National Federation of the Blind California/California Association of Guide Dog Users Fall Convention

(Board Secretary Joe Xavier)

“What is a Service Animal and Why You Need to Know,” a question-and-answer event covering changes to the definition of a service animal in Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(Speakers included Liz Savage, U.S. Department of Justice; and Fred Nisen and Stuart Seaborn, Disability Rights California.)

LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND ADVOCACY

March 2011: The Board supported legislative efforts to extend the sunset review of both the Board and the Arbitration Review Panel. Without such legislation, no review would have been conducted. Additionally, the Board supported Senate Bill 944 (Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development Committee) which made technical, nonsubstantive changes to the Guide Dog Act.

April 2011: The Board promulgated regulations to clarify requirements for instructors eligible for licensure, made changes to the apprenticeship standards for licensed guide dog schools, added training competencies for guide dogs before pairing with a guide dog user, and clarified when dogs need to complete required training competencies.

May 2011: A regulatory package sought to establish a citation-and-fine program for licensed schools and guide dog instructors and clarified practice definitions including adding definitions for the terms “guide dog,” “client,” “guide dog team,” “instructor,” “apprentice,” and “instruction.”

Also in 2011: The Board formally supported Assembly Bill 410 (Swanson). This bill requires specific agencies to provide regulation materials in accessible format. We applaud the efforts of California Council of the Blind in sponsoring this bill.

“This year the Board continued to take positions on State and Federal policy impacting our stakeholders. We will continue in this vein next calendar year.”

—**Tom Scott**, Chair
Legislative Committee

LICENSING/EXAMINATIONS

The Board held two examinations resulting in nine new guide dog instructors.

WEB SITE

Total Web site hits for 2011 equaled 432,000 with tips on dog attacks on guide dogs as the most viewed page at almost 10,000 hits. Our Web site continues to be updated with information on State and Federal laws and regulations. It includes a license lookup feature, which allows employers and consumers to search for the license status of a school or guide dog instructor. Check it out at www.guidedogboard.ca.gov.

We also continue to update stakeholder-specific pages for consumers, applicants, apprentices, and licensees.

LOOKING AHEAD

“In 2012, the Board will begin the sunset review process. We will take a close look at our licensing, enforcement, and outreach functions under the current structure and seek to make improvements where necessary.”

—**Eric Holm**, Board President

