ICBV Office Update

February 5, 2018

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**\*\*1** **Calendar of Events**

**February 10, 2018**

In partnership with The Chicago Lighthouse, the American Theater Company presents… An Audio Description and Touch Tour Performance of WE’RE GONNA BE OKAY Discounted Tickets: $35

Touch Tour Schedule and Information

12:30 pm: Conversation with ATC's Associate Artistic Director,

Touch Tour, and Actor Introduction

2:00 - 3:45 pm: Performance

4:00 pm: Reception

This event is geared towards people who represent a broad range of visual abilities. The touch tour component is a mostly conversational exploration of the performance and its visual elements. The audio description will convey the visual intentions of the performance so that the patron never wonders what's going on.

For questions, please contact Lindsay Inglis:

lindsay.inglis@chicagolighthouse.org or (312) 447-3448.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

In the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy addressed the nation, “My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out...but the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.” We’re Gonna Be Okay confronts the fears of the American middle class as two families wrestle with macrame, female empowerment and a shared property line.

**March 20-23, 2018**

NAMA One Show in Las Vegas

(Randolph-Sheppard Training on March 20th)

**May 21-22, 2018**

NABM Goes to the Hill in Washington D.C.

NABM Advocacy and Current Issue Training in Washington, D.C.

**July 3-8, 2018**

NFB National Convention

Place: Rosen Shingle in Orlando Florida

Join the largest gathering of the blind next year.

**July 24-25, 2018**

NAMA DC Fly-In

The Fairmont Hotel

2401 M St NW

Washington, DC 20037

For more information visit:

[www.namaflyin.org](http://www.namaflyin.org)

**November 13-16, 2018**

BLAST Conference in San Antonio, Texas

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**\*\*2** **Cullen & Associates State of the State and Session Update**

Republican Governor Bruce Rauner delivered his fourth and final State of the State Address of his first-term to a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly today. Calling for bipartisanship and restoration of trust, the Governor’s speech touted Illinois’ rich history and his Administration’s recent successes.

While still peppered with the remnants of his initial Turn Around agenda, such as calling for referenda on property tax relief and term limits, the Governor appealed for a halt to the advance of taxes and spending money the State does not have, while bringing pension obligations under control. To that end, the Governor promised to submit a balanced, FY19 budget proposal to the General Assembly on February 14th, which was met with a roar of applause from both sides of the aisle. The Governor noted that his budget proposal will offer a path to reduced spending and the creation of budget surpluses going forward so taxes can be reduced.

Much like last year, Rauner noted his successes in the areas of ethics reform, increased education funding and reform, job creation, criminal justice reform, and increased government efficiency. With respect to ethics reform and sexual harassment, Rauner announced he will be filing an Executive Order today to strengthen the policies that ensure all government employees under his jurisdiction have “reliable and responsible outlets for reporting acts of sexual misconduct.” The Order will create a chief compliance office within the executive branch; require reviews of allegations within 10 days; and require training on best investigation practices by the end of this year and every two years thereafter. Rauner pledged to introduce legislation to make the Ethics Act the “prevailing law of the State in all matters involving misconduct.” Losing his air of bipartisanship, Rauner also announced that he issued an executive order that prevents legislators from practicing before the state property tax appeal board, a shot-across-the-bows of Democrat leaders House Speaker Mike Madigan and Senate President John Cullerton, who both practice law at firms dealing with property tax assessment matters.

In his response to the Governor’s speech, Senate President John Cullerton, noting that the Governor’s speech was shorter than President Trump’s State of the Union Address, called it deceptive and disappointing. Cullerton said the Governor has never introduced a balanced budget and rejected the Senate’s bipartisan “Grand Bargain” last spring. In a prepared statement, Speaker Madigan said, “Rauner chooses to blame others for the challenges facing our State on his watch instead of being the leader he was elected to be.” Madigan stated that the General Assembly will continue to work in a bipartisan manner to move the State forward, preferring Rauner “continue sitting on the sidelines…” Republican Leaders Senator Bill Brady and Representative Jim Durkin both felt all parties could work together to solve problems and move the State forward. Comptroller Susana Mendoza said, “…Governor Rauner turned the $5 billion backlog of bills he inherited into a $16.7 billion backlog. He deficit-spent more than any other governor in the history of Illinois - $5 billion a year.” The primary and general elections are well underway.

Six weeks remain before the March 20th primary election. Rauner, who is up for re-election, faces a primary challenge from sitting Republican State Representative Jeanne Ives. Ives recently accused the Governor of adopting “liberal progressive policies,” and said there is no bigger “indictment” of Rauner than residents fleeing the State.” The winner of the March primary will face off in November against the winner of the six-way, Democratic primary.

In other action this week, both the Senate and the House overrode the Governor’s veto of SB 444, which was trailer legislation needed to implement the new education reform law (PA 100-465) passed last year. The Governor, in his Amendatory Veto, rewrote the bill to allow additional private and parochial schools to qualify for a newly-created scholarship program, which creates scholarships for low- and middle-income students to afford private schools. SB 444 will now become law as originally approved by the General Assembly.

The Illinois Senate voted 48-2 to override the Governor’s veto of SB 332, which authorizes the issuance of a liquor license to a restaurant in Senator Munoz’s district. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

An amendment to create the Geolocation Privacy Protection Act (SB 1021 (SFA 0001), was assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee for a hearing. The amendment provides that a private entity may not collect, use, store, or disclose geolocation information from a location-based application on a person's device unless the private entity first receives the person's affirmative express consent after complying with specified notice requirements. Other geolocation privacy legislation (HB3449) was vetoed by the Governor last summer. A hearing on the amendment is not scheduled at this time.

Representative Martwick filed legislation (HB4371) to authorize the issuance of an additional $107 billion in State Serial Long Term Pension Obligation Bonds. The legislation also creates a continuing appropriation for payments on those bonds. While the bill is still assigned to the House Rules Committee, the House Personnel and Pensions Committee held a subject matter hearing on the matter Tuesday. The sponsor believes the bonding will help pay down the State's $130 billion unfunded pension liability. Critics of the plan argue it would be the largest bond issuance in world history.

Negotiations continue on the redesign of the State’s hospital assessment program and MCO reforms. Originally scheduled for consideration during the Fall Veto Session, it is unclear whether the latest, proposed language will have the requisite votes needed for passage. Hospital communities around the State are vying for $3.5 billion dollars in funding, a combination of hospital tax dollars and federal funding that is to be redistributed based on updated claims data. The Governor’s position on the latest IHA draft legislation is unknown at this time. The hospital assessment program is set to expire June 30, 2018, and timing is critical to avoid a lapse in Medicaid payments to hospitals, which would create a cash-flow crisis for critical access and safety-net hospitals and their patients. Also at stake is $750 million the State receives for Illinois’ Medicaid program. A subject matter hearing was held on the proposed hospital assessment redesign Tuesday.

State Representative Elgie Sims has been named to replace State Senator Donne Trotter who recently retired. A replacement for Sims House seat has not yet been named. Monica Bristow, former director of RiverBend Growth Association, has been appointed to replace Representative Dan Beiser (D) of Alton. Beiser resigned in mid-December after serving since 2004.

On December 3rd, 2018, Illinois will celebrate its 200th birthday. It’s unclear whether this year of state celebrations will be met with bipartisan solutions to many of the State’s outstanding issues or overshadowed by partisan bickering in a year of several, contested primary and general elections. Almost $30 million was spent on campaigns for Governor in the last three months of 2017, with most of that spending coming from billionaires Governor Rauner and Democrat governor-hopeful JB Pritzker. The March 20th primary will likely set the stage for the remainder of the Spring Legislative Session.

2018 Key Session Dates:

February 2: LRB Deadline, both Chambers

February 14: Governor’s Budget Address

February 16: Bill Introduction Deadline, both Chambers

March 20: Primary Election

April 13: Committee Deadline, both Chambers

April 27: Third Reading Deadline for bills in first chamber, both Chambers

May 11: Senate Committee Deadline, House Bills

May 18: House Committee Deadline, Senate Bills

May 25: Third Reading Deadline for bills in second chamber, both Chambers

May 31: Adjournment

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**\*\*3** IAMC Legislative Report on the 100th General Assembly

2018 Spring Session January 26, 2018 Prepared by BP Consultants

The attached Legislative Report includes legislation from the 2018

Spring Session of the 100th General Assembly. This report has been

prepared by BP Consultants on behalf of IAMC.

We have included bills that we believe may be of interest to your

organization. Please review this report carefully to see if we have

included all areas of interest. If we have included legislation that

is not relevant or legislation that you do not wish to track, please

let me know and they will be removed.

The next scheduled session day for the House and Senate is January

30th. The Governor’s State of the State Address is January 31st.

Please see below for the upcoming legislative deadlines, including

February 2nd as the last date to request new legislation from the

Legislative Reference Bureau.

Comptroller Mendoza’s office has issued their first Debt Transparency

Act Monthly Report, as required by PA 100-0552. This initiative from

the Comptroller’s Office amends the State Finance Act and requires

state agencies, as defined in the Act, to report their monthly

liabilities in a manner prescribed by the Comptroller. The report is

intended to provide greater transparency and a truer sense of bills

for state services incurred but not yet sent to the Comptroller for

payment. The Debt Transparency Report confirms that as of December 31,

2017, the state had incurred more than $1 billion in late payment

interest penalties. The state’s general funds bill backlog stood at

$9.246 billion on December 31st with $2.476 billion of that total at

state agencies. The report also confirms that there are $2.3 billion

in unappropriated liabilities held at state agencies. Here is a link

to the current report:

<https://ledger.illinoiscomptroller.gov/fiscal-condition/the-dta-report/> .

Upcoming Important Dates and Deadlines:

January 30, 2018 – Next House and Senate Session Date

January 31, 2018 – Governor Rauner’s State of the State Address

February 2, 2018 – Deadline to request House and Senate Bills from LRB

February 14, 2018 – Governor Rauner’s Budget Address

February 16, 2018 – Deadline to Introduce Substantive House and Senate Bills

April 13, 2018 – Deadline to Report Substantive House Bills from House

Committees and Substantive Senate Bills from Senate Committees

April 27, 2018 – Third Reading Deadline for House Bills in the House

and Senate Bills in the Senate

Thank you,

Desi Harris

and

Scott Goodwin, President

IAMC

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**\*\*4** Shared by Terry Smith, NABM

**National Association of Blind Merchants - Day on the Hill**

The National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM) and the National Federation of the Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative (NFBEI) will be holding a Day on the Hill on May 20-21, 2018. Please make arrangements to join us in Washington, D.C. so we can let our voices be heard and collectively protect the priority.

A bill has been introduced that **will allow commercialization of interstate rest areas** and the President is promoting an infrastructure plan that has been leaked and we know for certain it includes the option for states to commercialize their rest areas through public-private partnerships. If this becomes the law of the land, almost 400 blind entrepreneurs who operate vending at these rest areas could be displaced almost instantly. Add to that the fact that several programs who rely on funding from third party vendors would face financial ruin. We have to continue our fight to prevent DOD from promulgating the proposed troop dining rules and educate the Armed Services Committee in an effort to thwart any attempt by AbilityOne to get language added to the National Defense Authorization Act this year that would further weaken our priority for troop dining. We must continue to put political pressure on the VA to comply with the law. Now, burdensome OMB regulations are being imposed on states that require federal approval of all purchases of over $5,000. This will slow down purchasing to a crawl and dramatically impact vendors’ ability to make a living. We continue to get threats from the American Heart Association who want to mandate only healthier options to be sold in our vending machines.

 This year, we will kick things off with some extensive training on Monday afternoon, May 20th. John Pare and Gabe Casarez from the National Federation of the Blind’s Baltimore Office will lead the training and it will focus on how to be an effective advocate on The Hill and in your everyday lives. That training will begin at 3:00 and conclude by 6:00.

 To register to attend the Fly-In, go to [www.blindmerchants.org](http://www.blindmerchants.org). Complete the registration form and submit. We will make appointments for you with your members of Congress on Tuesday, May 21st.

 The host hotel will be the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel, 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, Virginia, 22209. You can book your room by going to <http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=NABM%20DC%20Fly%20In%20and%20ECM%20Training%5EWASKB%60NAFNAFR%60199.00%60USD%60false%604%605/17/18%605/26/18%604/26/18&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes> You may also call 703-524-6400and ask for the NABM Fly In rate which is $199.00. We have a block of rooms for the nights of May 19, 20, and 21.

 The Randolph-Sheppard Program is under attack. Help us defend it. Register now!

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**\*\*5** From the AppleVis Editorial Team January 23, 2018 - **Apple Releases iOS 11.2.5; With a Focus on Security and Under the Hood Improvements**

Apple has today released iOS 11.2.5 to the public.

According to Apple's release notes, via MacRumors, this update includes the following changes.

HomePod support: Setup and automatically transfer your Apple ID, Apple Music, Siri and Wi-Fi settings to HomePod.

Siri News: Siri can now read the news, just ask, "Hey Siri, play the news". You can also ask for specific news categories including Sports, Business or Music.

Other improvements and fixes

Addresses an issue that could cause the Phone app to display incomplete information in the call list

Fixes an issue that caused Mail notifications from some Exchange accounts to disappear from the Lock screen when unlocking iPhone X with Face ID

Addresses an issue that could cause Messages conversations to temporarily be listed out of order

Fixes an issue in CarPlay where Now Playing controls become unresponsive after multiple track changes

Adds ability for VoiceOver to announce playback destinations and AirPod battery level

In addition, It has been reported that this update addresses a bug that allowed a malicious link to freeze the Messages app.

We have not discovered any noticeable outward-facing changes during our testing, so it's possible that this update focuses mainly on this security vulnerability; along with other bug fixes and under the hood improvements. We will update this post if we learn of any notable changes.

Based on our testing, we believe blind and low vision users will find no accessibility changes in iOS 11.2.5.

In regard to possible new bugs for VoiceOver users, there is a problem with Lock Screen notifications which we are not completely sure is new in iOS 11.2.5, but-if not-is certainly far more prevalent. Specifically, accessing and using the VoiceOver Actions menu on Lock Screen notifications can be frustratingly unreliable. When flicking up or down on a notification, you may find that VoiceOver simply repeats the notification instead of providing access to rotor options )such as Clear or More). From our experience, it may take several attempts before it works correctly.

Read More: "Apple Releases iOS 11.2.5; With a Focus on Security and Under the Hood Improvements"

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**\*\*6** Shared by Second Sense - **Radio-Locator.com**

Would you like to explore the vast landscape of radio? Now, with most traditional radio stations streaming their content on the Internet, a vast amount of content is available for you to access. Radio-Locator.com is a radio station search engine with access to over 15,200 radio stations and webpages, as well as over 10,500 audio streams from stations in the U.S. and around the world. It is easy to search by format, country or geographic location. To go exploring, visit [www.radio-locator.com](http://www.radio-locator.com) .

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**\*\*7** Shared by Second Sense - **Protecting Your iPhone from the Cold**

It’s cold out there this winter and when you're traveling outdoors, your iPhone is cold, too! Apple designs their phones to operate in temperatures 32 degrees Fahrenheit and above. When temperatures get below that, you may experience your phone quickly running out of its battery charge, shutting down completely, having display problems or even developing a shattered glass screen. Here are a couple of tips to protect your phone when you have to be out in these arctic temperatures: First, keep your phone in your pocket, as your body temperature will help keep it warm. Don’t leave your phone in a parked car without heat for an extended period of time. Use a special insulated case. Don’t charge your phone when it is cold as this can cause further damage.

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**\*\*8** Shared by Claudia, RSA

**'You don't have to see it to tee it' — Meet blind golf champion Mario Tobia** By Henry Young, CNN Updated 11:29 AM ET, Thu January 25, 2018

(CNN)You approach the tee, select your club, adjust your hands, align your feet and visualize your swing.

It's a routine practiced by millions of golfers around the world. Now imagine doing it with your eyes closed. All the time. That's what it's like for Mario Tobia, a four-time American blind golf champion redefining what's possible on the course.

"When I first lost my vision it was pretty traumatic," Tobia tells CNN Sport. "I had to stop working and things like that. "Now I actually tell people that golf saved my life."

A Hands-on approach

Tobia regularly drives the ball over 240 yards — just 50 yards less than the PGA Tour average. Typically scoring in the high 90s and low 100s in a casual round, the New Jersey native has shot as low as 86. But, of course, he doesn't do it all alone. Enter Frank Hesson, a golf coach with a difference. "I'm Mario's guide," says Hesson. "Usually we'll get out to a golf course, go through a warm up program, just like anyone else would. "Mario knows through his own practice how far he hits the ball with each of his golf clubs. Basically, he relies on me to give him some lie conditions.

"When he's ready, I grab the club and set it physically behind the golf ball. I tell him to open or close the club face, depending on whether it's lined up correctly. "And then he says 'good?' and I say 'good!' and he goes off and takes the shot just like everybody else."

Video at: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/23/golf/mario-tobia-frank-hesson-blind-golf/index.html>

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**\*\*9** Shared by Coleen Wonderlich – **Hadley Announcing 2018 New Venture Business Competition**

Backed by a $10,000 prize from Hadley’s 2017 New Venture

Business Competition, Olusegun Ogidan will soon open

Savanna Coffee in Denver. Image shows Olusegun working

an espresso machine at a coffee shop.

Submit your business plan and you could win

up to $30,000 to turn your idea into a reality!

In its third year, Hadley’s New Venture Business Competition

is open to any visually impaired individual who completes

at least one business course or module through our

Forsythe Center for Employment and Entrepreneurship

and submits their business plan.

Deadline for submission is March 15, 2018. New Venture Business Competition Details <http://hadley.edu/fce-nvc.asp>

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**\*\*10** Shared by Ed Birmingham for NABM

**National Association of Blind Merchants**

National Federation of the Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative

Dear Blind Entrepreneur and Randolph-Shappard Stakeholders:

As an active blind entrepreneur, I am confident that you are aware of the contributions to the Randolph-Sheppard community by the National Association of Blind Merchants Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative (NFBEI). From an advocacy perspective, 2017 was a very busy year. We worked hard on many issues that impact blind entrepreneurs across the country. I won’t try to highlight them here but visit our website at www.blindmerchants.org and read the 2017 issues of The Blitz. I think you will be impressed.

What we accomplished last year is a source of pride but more important is what we need to do in 2018. Troop dining opportunities are being threatened by proposed regulations published by the Department of Defense and other efforts by DOD to circumvent the priority. We have found an ally in Congress and we are gaining momentum on our fight against AbilityOne but we must remain vigilant. Efforts to commercialize the interstate rest areas, which would devastate the Randolph-Sheppard Program, are gaining momentum every day. In fact, just this week, the President’s infrastructure plan was leaked and it specifically includes rest area commercialization. The American Heart Association has all but declared war on blind entrepreneurs and is working state by state to implement legislation and/or executive orders that would impact a blind entrepreneurs ability to earn a living by requiring only healthier options to be sold in government buildings. The actions of the General Services Administration threaten current and future opportunities in federal buildings. The Veteran’s Administration continues to blatantly violate the law. State Little Randolph-Sheppard Acts are vulnerable and being weakened. The U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration is attempting to impose burdensome regulations on SLA’s that will make it impossible to run their programs efficiently. And there will certainly be more challenges in 2017.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of Randolph-Sheppard. We are planning a Fly In on May 20-21 in D.C. We need you there. We hope to host our first ever Congressional reception while there so we can better connect with members of Congress and educate them about our program. We will be doing an Emerging Leaders Training in conjunction with the Fly In. We need you to help us find the leaders of tomorrow. We will continue to retain the services of Brown, Goldstein, and Levy to fight DOD . We will make ourselves very visible on The Hill in 2017 as we fight rest area commercialization.

We need your financial support. Fly Ins and Congressional receptions are not cheap. Brown, Goldstein, and Levy are the best but they too are expensive. That’s why I am writing to you as part of our annual fundraising drive. We rely 100% on the generosity of our blind entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to fund our advocacy efforts. This includes funding for our annual fly in in D.C. We hope you will help us promote and protect the program that has been so good to you and other blind people. If you believe in the work we are collectively doing with the NFBEI, then please donate to our cause. You can do so by sending a check made out to the National Association of Blind Merchants and note in the memo portion of the check that it is for the NFBEI. Send your check to:

National Association of Blind Merchants

7450 Chapman Highway, # 319

Knoxville, TN 37920

You may also donate by credit card by going to www.blindmerchants.org . And we have even made it super easy for you to donate with monthly bank drafts. If you are interested in setting up regular bank drafts, contact Barbara Badger at Barbara.Badger60@gmail.com or by telephone at 865-806-0469. Your donations are fully tax deductible.

If you have questions or want to learn more about the NFBEI, you can visit our website at www.blindmerchants.org and click on the NFBEI icon or feel free to call Terry Smith at 865-599-7148 or email him at terrysmith@epbfi.com. You may also feel free to call me at the number listed below.

Thank you for your support!

Nicky Gacos, President

National Association of Blind Merchants

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**\*\*11** From Vending Market Watch

**IRPA Continues Battles For Sales Tax Parity**

JAN 31, 2018 SOURCE: INDIANA REFRESHMENT PROVIDER ASSOCIATION (IRPA)

The Indiana Refreshment Provider Association (IRPA) continued their efforts to obtain Sales Tax Parity for the Operators doing business in Indiana as noted in an email from Executive Director/Lobbyist, Steve Beebe:

"SB 124, our sales tax parity legislation, passed the Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee earlier today by a vote of 11-0! This is a significant victory as the committee process is the most critical step in the passage of legislation in Indiana.

"Jeff Snyder and Justin McDonald provided the testimony before the committee and deftly fielded several questions. And I would be remiss if I didn’t give credit to Sen. Jon Ford who has been advising us and working his colleagues behind the scenes. And I’d be doubly remiss if I didn’t thank our bill author, Sen. Travis Holdman for scheduling the bill for a hearing in his committee. And let me add triply (or is it thrice?) remiss if I didn’t thank those IRPA members who emailed their state senator who serves as a member of the Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee. It was a great team victory!"

The Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee was the stopping point for Sales Tax Parity in Indiana in the 2017 Legislative session. Given the overwhelming support of the Indiana House of Representative in 2017, coupled with this most recent event, must be considered extremely encouraging for everyone doing business in Indiana that the long sought objective of Parity may finally be achieved.

 SB 124 will be eligible for 2nd and 3rd reading at the beginning of next week. 2nd reading is the opportunity for any Senator to offer an amendment to the bill but we do not anticipate any amendments at this time. If there are no amendments, the bill automatically passes to 3rd reading which is the final vote in the Senate. Upon passage of the Senate, SB 124 will move to the House where the process will be repeated.

As a final request in his email to members, Steve Beebe suggested. "If you have already emailed your State Senator because they are a member of the Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee, send a follow-up email and thank them for supporting SB 124."

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**\*\*12** **This week on Eyes On Success**:

1805 **Camp Abilities - Camp for Blind Youth** (Jan. 31, 2018)

Now in its 23rd year, Camp Abilities has spread to locations not only

throughout the U.S. but also around the world. Hosts Nancy and Peter Torpey talk with founder and director, Lauren Lieberman, about the benefits of this week long, sports oriented camp for visually impaired youth and how it can be a life changing experience for those who attend.

1804 **eSight Eyewear** (Jan. 24, 2018)

Developed for people who are legally blind, the electronic glasses made by

eSight can help individuals with a variety of visual impairments see better

and can be used for virtually all activities of daily living. Hosts Nancy

and Peter Torpey talk with Jeff Fenton, Director of Outreach and

Communications for eSight, about the device and how it can be used.

1803 **Encore of 1650 Building Electronics Projects** (Jan. 17, 2018)

Though Ken Perry and Josh Miele are both blind, their lack of vision doesn't prevent them from designing and building their own electronic hardware. Hosts Nancy and Peter Torpey talk with them about the Blind Arduino Project as well as other tools that enable blind people of all ages to participate in the vibrant global culture of hardware prototyping.

Find the podcast in Apple podcasts or at:

[www.eyesOnSuccess.net](http://www.eyesOnSuccess.net)

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**\*\*13** From Vending Times

**Amazon Go Automated C-Store Opens To Public** by Emily Jed

Posted On: 1/25/2018

SEATTLE -- Amazon has opened the doors to its cashier-less convenience store here to the public, following a year-long pilot open only to its employees.

The Seattle store is now open to anyone with the Amazon Go smartphone app and a linked Amazon account. Shoppers use an app to enter, shop and pay for their purchases, without the need for a cashier. Amazon Go is controlled by sensors that track the items customers take from the shelves.

When the store, located at Seventh Avenue and Blanchard Street, opened to Amazon employees in December 2016, the online retail giant expected to open it to the public in early 2017. The company didn't meet that deadline, with The Wall Street Journal reporting that the system crashed in tests when the store was crowded. | READ MORE <https://www.vendingtimes.com/articles/amazon-postpones-opening-cashierfree-cstore-5933>

Last year, the company also opened two pilot sites for a curbside grocery-delivery program.

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**\*\*14** From Vending Market Watch

**Why The Industry Should Consider Amazon Pay** JAN 25, 2018

Amazon, Amazon...Everywhere There's Amazon. It has been featured in online articles, blogs, at trade shows and in our December/January issue of Automatic Merchandiser. The general media is reporting revenues, new partnerships and the public opening of Amazon Go (a public, kiosk free micro market). Amazon seems to be everywhere. While some view this as a headache, the optimist in me challenges you to see it as an opportunity for success. And I just read an article about the future of payments that might just make that pay off.

PYMNTS.com is a publication that covers electronic payment topics and trends, including reporting on unattended retail. It's an industry that overlaps in places with vending and in a recent synopsis of trends for 2018 it argued that commerce would be more important than connected devices when talking about consumers and cashless payments.

Think Amazon, not Apple

There is that name again, Amazon. In What's Next For Payments And Commerce In 2018, author Karen Webster talks about the importance not of the technology that makes cashless buying possible, but the retailer. We have been hearing for years about mobile wallets and how they will take over purchasing...any minute now. The reality is that while mobile payments grow, it hasn't been explosive. On the other hand, Amazon has been blasting upwards. One of the reasons is that anyone, from small mom and pop retailers to large brand names can sell on Amazon, at least according to Webster. Alexa is integrated into a number of different devices, not just one and consumers can shop on Amazon from any online device.

Commerce-centric

Bringing it back to the vending industry, we need to be more commerce-centric, meaning we have to focus on the sale, and making it easy for consumers to get what they want (like Amazon). We need to avoid requiring only the use of our app or our machines (like Amazon). We need to make it so easy and safe to buy from us, that there is no reason to do anything else (like Amazon). And we should consider Amazon Pay.

I haven't heard anyone mention Amazon Pay before in our industry. Why is that? True, if you look at the number of sites that accept Apply Pay or even Google Wallet, there is a definite lack of availability. Apple Pay has by far the most of those three. However, with Amazon having such a strong name, could we work with them on the payments side to be more convenient to our end user, and the people at locations who make decisions about service? Could this be part of the last mile discussion?

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