Making the “Invisible” World “Visible”
Vision Loss: A Growing Problem

Best estimates indicate that over 25 million Americans are experiencing vision loss, most with low vision. These numbers are growing everyday as the baby boomers age.
We Live in an Invisible World

Our architectural standards in this country have led to an invisible world, a world in which falls among the elderly cause more deaths than do medical conditions.
Falls and Vision Loss

- People with reduced visual acuity are 1.7 times more likely to fall.
- They are 1.9 more times more likely to have multiple falls than are people with normal vision.
- The odds of hip fracture are between 1.3 and 1.9 times greater for people with reduced visual acuity (Legood, Scuffham, Cryer, 2002).
The Economic Impact of Vision Problems

2007 Study by Prevent Blindness:

• Annual Cost of Adult Vision Problems in U.S. = $51.4 billion

• Non medical costs = $11.2 billion, most of which goes to nursing home care.

• Direct Medical costs = $16.2 billion annually

• Lost Productivity = $8 billion

• Informal care costs: $.36 billion
AFB Center on Vision Loss

“ADA Doesn’t Have to Be Ugly.” Come Inside and See For Yourself”
Simple Design Principles that Can Make the Built Environment Easier to “See” and Navigate

• If done upfront, they are not expensive to implement

• Most can be retrofitted easily

Rick Lee, Architect
Using the Environmental Organization to Promote Way finding

Jim Langford, Architect-Wayfinding

Corridor Doors that Line Up & Floor Texture Change

Langford -- Organization
Using Contrast and Texture to Promote Wayfinding and “Visibility”

Langford on Contrast
Using Texture at DFW Airport Terminal D
Using Contrast on Steps
Using Contrast in the Bath
Using Contrast in the Kitchen
Using Contrast on Door Frames & Light Switches
Using Sufficient Lighting

Langford on Lighting
Designing Beyond ADA

Rick — going beyond…

Jim — there is so much more…
Design Concepts That Enhance Wayfinding

- Increasing “visibility” with high contrast
- Providing sufficient lighting and glare control
- Using logical, consistent layouts in building design
- Eliminating extra/distracting sounds/echoes
- Using tactile surfaces for flooring.
- Consistently placing signage in LP and braille
Resources

AFB Senior Site (afb.org/seniorsite)

AFB publications including:

Architects cited

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