

Independent Perspective #1914

Disability Pride Accessibility Features with Mike Rogers

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:05 Speaker 1

I'm your host, Tracy LeBlanc, Chief Community Engagement Officer at Western New York Independent Living.

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The 2026 Disability Pride Festival is coming up this week on Friday, July 24th at Buffalo River Works.

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As a celebration of people of all abilities, one of the areas in focus during the festival is accessibility.

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Joining us today to talk about the accessibility features

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at the festival and the venue is the Accessibility Committee Chairperson, Mike Rogers.

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Welcome to the show, Mike.

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Hi, Tracy, and listeners.

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Mike, let's start with an overview of what the purpose of the Accessibility Committee is.

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Sure.

00:00:46 Speaker 2

Well, our purpose is to make the experience of the Pride Festival for people with disabilities as nice as possible.

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Because we want to make sure that people can actually enjoy, you know, enjoy the festival without wondering how to get around.

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Who can help?

00:01:08 Speaker 2

How am I going to go to the bathroom?

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How, you know, if I need special accommodations for food prep, you know, how am I going to do all those things?

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Because a lot of times that will stop people from going to events because they consider it too hard.

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So, we want to make

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the event as inclusive as possible.

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Great.

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Let's break down some of the key accessibility features of the festival, starting with getting there and getting around the festival.

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What can you tell us about transportation and parking?

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Sure.

00:01:40 Speaker 2

Well, there is going to be, you know, there's going to be regular parking close to the event, but there also is going to be a shuttle from the downtown transportation hub for NFTA

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to the event because people are worried about not being able to get there, you know, from where they are.

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So, that that's going to be at regular intervals.

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So, they and and the event is going to be at River Works.

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So, it's all basically in a circle area.

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So, it's very convenient.

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What about the welcome tent and information kiosks?

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What is the purpose of those?

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Those are so that people

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can get all the information that they need.

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There's going to be maps there.

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There's going to be people guides that can help you get around.

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And this is something you might ask later, but there also are going to be interpreters there.

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So those are going to be like central hubs so that people don't have to search around to know how to get around and get help when they need it.

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Great.

00:02:49 Speaker 1

There are a number of special support features at the festival, including American Sign Language interpreters, accessibility support crew, and a mobile bathroom unit.

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Can you walk us through those features?

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Yeah.

00:03:03 Speaker 2

The mobile bathroom unit, I find one of the more interesting ones is that, you know, when we as people with disabilities go to an event,

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It, you know, and you and you have the accessible porta potties.

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Those can get kind of messy and kind of smelly and stuff like that.

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Well, the accessible bathroom unit will be cleaned, and it's basically an RV that's an accessible bathroom.

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So, I've never heard of that before this time, and I think that's great.

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Please say again the other things you asked me.

00:03:41 Speaker 1

Yeah, the American Sign Language interpreters and the accessibility support crew.

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Yeah, you know, the thing about getting around an event, especially if you have some challenges, you know, visually or, you know, with hearing, you sometimes feel lost, right?

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So, we're going to have ASL American Sign Language interpreters

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there for people to utilize.

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They're going to be stationed at various places.

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For example, this, the the speakers area, so that you can.

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You know what's going on, and you can ask for them to be around you.

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If you're having

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some difficulty with interpreting.

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So, they're going to be there.

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And the support crew is going to be pivotal because they'll be able to be guides and help you get where you need to be.

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Something that I've never seen it in a lot of other events.

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That's all the time we have for this week.

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Thank you for joining us, Mike.

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If you're planning to come down to Disability Pride Festival and want to get details on the day's activities, we encourage you to visit our website at

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disabilitypridewny.org.

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And thank you for tuning in to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:05:03 Speaker 1

Today's guest was Mike Rogers, Chairman of the Accessibility Committee for this year's Disability Pride Festival.

00:05:09 Speaker 1

And I have been your host, Tracy LeBlanc.