

# The Allegan County News



Contact Us:  
Keechle Publications, Inc.  
231 Trowbridge St.  
Allegan, MI 49010  
Phone: (269) 673-5534  
Fax: (269) 673-5535

The Commercial Record

The Plainwell & Otsego

Union Enterprise

## First-ever 'Ability Award' goes to Wedge

Wednesday, November 2, 2011 11:28 AM EDT

HOLLAND—Disability Network/Lakeshore presented its first-ever Ability Award to Allegan County transportation director Dan Wedge at the Ability Award Reception and Ceremony on Oct. 25 at Boatwerks Restaurant.

More than 80 people attended.

Presented to an individual in Allegan or Ottawa county who persists in the vision of a community without barriers where people can participate, contribute and belong regardless of ability, the award honors the legacy of Ruth Stegeman.

As the founding director of Disability Network/Lakeshore, Stegeman's passion and leadership over 18 years emphasized inclusive communities that engage all citizens, including those with disabilities.

She has secured a reputation for encouraging communities to remove barriers and to help citizens become more



**Allegan County transportation director Dan Wedge is pictured with Disability Network/Lakeshore's first-ever Ability Award. (Photo provided)**

engaged by embracing concepts such as livable communities, affordable and accessible housing and public transportation.

Award selection committee chairperson Terry DeYoung presented the award to Wedge and described him as someone who “persists in envisioning a community without barriers, regardless of ability.”

DeYoung also said Wedge excelled in the four nominee selection areas of leadership, advocacy, empowerment, and community engagement.

Wedge said knowing that he is making a difference for people from the community and giving them options that they otherwise would not have is what excels his passion for creating livable communities.

During his 12 years as transportation director, Wedge has worked with community partners and government agencies to build a transportation system from scratch. Without the benefit of local transportation taxes, Allegan County today has a state-of-the-art, \$3.5 million transit facility and a fleet of 28 vehicles.

Wedge's partnerships have developed over 25 years of personal investment at the local, regional and state levels.

He currently serves as the State of Michigan's delegate to the Community Transportation Association of America; he is active on two committees of the Michigan Public Transit Association; and, on behalf of Easter Seals Project Action, he reviews and assesses grants that promote cooperation between the transportation industry and the disability community.

Locally, Wedge has a long history with the Allegan County Fair and Allegan Fire District boards. He has served on the Allegan City Historic District Commission; the Allegan City Planning Commission; the Allegan Township Planning Commission and Disability Network/Lakeshore.

In an effort to recognize young people in the community, the network will award a scholarship in addition to Ability Award next year.

To support the scholarship fund or for more information, call Todd Whiteman, at (616) 396-5326.