

The Register-Mail

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\$1.50

DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATIONS

Button restores 'service' to gas station

Hy-Vee installs device for those with disabilities to call attendant

BY SUSAN KAUFMAN
The Register-Mail

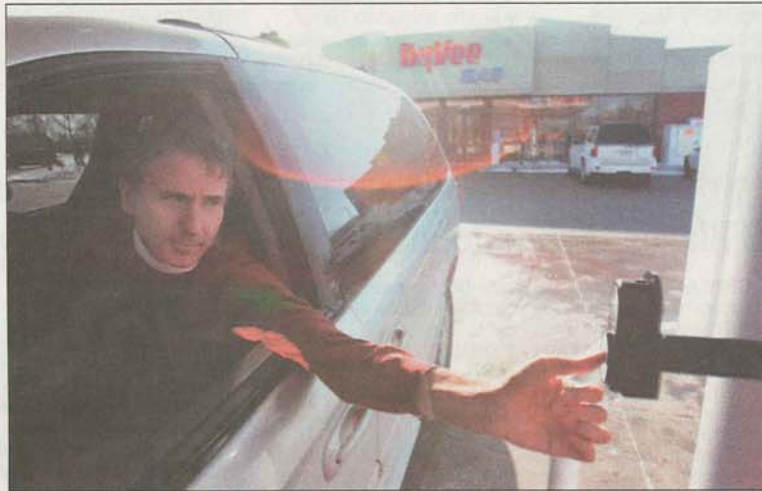
GALESBURG — When Mitchell Swanson needs to fill up his van's gas tank, it takes more planning than just making a quick pit-stop.

For Swanson, who has used a wheelchair since 1990, refueling at a standard self-serve gas station can take up to 45 minutes.

"Getting gasoline is very difficult," said Swanson. "Full-service gas stations were still around in the '90s but have all but disappeared." If he stops at a self-serve gas station, Swanson must park about four feet away from the pumps to allow room for his wheelchair ramp. He has to be extra cautious of traffic. In inclement weather, he may be outside for 20 minutes so he must dress accordingly. With minimal hand dexterity, he can't swipe a credit card easily. If he is travelling long distances, he may have to make a gas stop more than once a day.

There are approximately 10 million disabled drivers in the U.S. and refueling is often difficult for many of them. Some drivers use their cell phones to call the gas station attendant for help. Other drivers honk their horns, a practice that can disturb other customers. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act requires all self-serve gas stations to pump gas for their customers with disabilities when more than one employee is on duty, that doesn't always happen.

Swanson, who travels frequently with his job at Inclusion Solutions, an Evanston-based company that provides products so seniors and the disabled are independent, worked with Hy-Vee Gas Station at 2110 E. Main St. to install a FuelCall system.



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Mitchell Swanson of Lynn Center, pushes the service button on a FuelCall system at Hy-Vee Gas on East Main Street Friday afternoon. The device alerts attendants inside who will come and pump gas for those needing assistance with fueling.

The FuelCall system allows persons with disabilities or senior citizens to push a large touch pad next to the pump. The gas station staff is alerted by a chime and an attendant goes outside to assist the driver.

The FuelCall system has been up and running at Hy-Vee since Dec. 2 but most people are not yet aware the service exists.

"I don't think we've had anyone use it yet," said store manager Brad Hopping. "We still need to get the word out." A small blue sign on the pump indicates it is a FuelCall pump but people may just not be aware that it is there, according to Hopping.

David Lopez, sales manager for the FuelCall division of Inclusion Solutions, said he will soon add the FuelCall signage on the Interstate 74 marquee to alert travelers to the feature.

For Hy-Vee store director Dave Rasmussen, the decision to install the \$1,200 piece of equipment was an easy one. "The store director in Mt. Pleasant (Iowa) was paralyzed last year after falling off a deer stand," Rasmussen said. "We are all now looking at things that are



Brad Hopping, fuel station manager at Hy-Vee gas on East Main Street, pumps gas for Mitchell Swanson of Lynn Center Friday morning. A sign above Hopping identifies the pump as a FuelCall pump. Those needing assistance can push a call button near the pump, alerting attendants, who will come and pump gas.

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The Register-Mail

difficult for those with disabilities and how we can help." Several other Hy-Vee stores have installed the system.

The employee assisted refueling does not cost extra cash for the customer. Hy-Vee gas station employees are available from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. "Another beauty of the program is people can order goods from the

store," Lopez explained. "They can get milk or a cup of coffee. That is not only a benefit for the customer but it really helps the store, too."

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Dems name England treasurer

GALESBURG — L England of Gilson v elected treasurer of Knox County Democratic Central Committee during a special meeting Thursday. She takes office immediately.

England fills vacancy resulting from the resignation Nov. 18 of former treasurer Paula Monzo. She will serve the remainder of the unexpired term which expires at County Convention March 3, 2010, when officers for the central committee are elected by precinct committee for a full two-year term.

England has served the Democratic Party Knox County in various capacities over the several years, including serving as president of the Democratic Workers of Knox County. She employed in the office of Knox County Treasurer Robin Davis.

Monzo, Knox County recorder, was arrested Nov. 11 on a felony charge. She is accused of taking nearly \$3 from the Knox County Democratic Party while she served as party treasurer.

Maquon library events announced

MAQUON — The Maquon District Public Library is sponsoring the following events December.

At 10 a.m. Dec. 19, the library will have youth Christmas parties including crafts, games and a holiday movie.

A Christmas potluck will be at 1 p.m. Dec. Participants are asked to bring a covered dish and the library will provide sandwiches and drinks. Call 875-3573 to RSVP.

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Total to date: \$2,797
Paper Kettle goal: \$11,132.52

Drop off donations at The Register-Mail, 140 S. Prairie St.; or send to The Register-Mail, P.O. Box 310, Galesburg, IL 61401.

Town hall meeting Tuesday at library

GALESBURG — The People In Galesburg will have a Town Hall Meeting from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Galesburg Public Library.

Starting in July, The People In Galesburg, a community action group dedicated to fostering a healthy discourse among the people of the Galesburg area, orchestrated its first open forum Town Hall Meeting. Tuesday's meeting is the fourth such event. The meeting will be on the second floor of the library. The Nurturing Neighborhood Action Group will have its monthly meeting directly after the Town Hall Meeting in The Center, 123 S. Cherry St.

Organizers encourage Galesburg area residents to attend and voice their concerns and opinions and have the opportunity to meet other individuals similarly dedicated to bettering the community. The meeting is dedicated to letting the people speak. In this vein, the forum will be organized to maximize opportunities for all attendees to speak, if they so choose. All political views and positions are welcome, with a willingness to listen respectfully to other people required. For details about the meeting format, specifics about the action groups, and any additional information, visit www.ThePeopleInGalesburg.org.

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