

Chicago makes beaches accessible to disabled

"The Beachrings System," *Invisible Structures, Inc.*

(www.invisiblestructures.com), October 2001.

"10 beaches now ready for disabled," Liam Ford. *Chicago Tribune*

(www.chicagotribune.com), August 21, 2001.

Chicago's Park District has purchased 11 beach wheelchairs and equipped 10 of its 33 beaches with plastic mats that allow people using wheelchairs to get to the edge of Lake Michigan. The mats also provide a slip resistant surface for people assisted by walkers or crutches, and have been popular with bicyclists and families with strollers, as well.

Chicago now has more beach mats than any other city, according to Invisible Structures, Inc. of Colorado, the company that makes the mats. "It's becoming more common as cities have to make beaches more accessible for people," says Chris Spelic, east region manager for the company. Chicago's mats and beach wheelchairs project cost \$40,000.

The beach wheelchairs have all-terrain pneumatic tires that ride easily over sand, gravel, soft soils, forest trails and lightly-packed snow.

Minnesota note: All-terrain wheelchairs have been purchased by Maple Plain, Elm Creek Park Reserve in Osseo, French Regional Park in Plymouth and the Minnesota Veterans Home. (Sources: www.natural-access.com and www.beachwheelchair.com)

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