



Qwest Offers Tribal Lifeline and Tribal Link-Up Programs

by Clarke Christianson with help from
Sandra Kreber of SD Qwest

When I was doing promotion of Relay South Dakota during the open house of Cheyenne River Vocational Rehabilitation office in Eagle Butte last spring, a poster caught my eye. It explained about the Tribal Lifeline and Tribal Link-Up programs which are offered by Qwest to American Indians on the reservations. I pointed out the poster to Grady Kickul, the director of South Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation who came up from Pierre for the open house. He asked me to check into it and find out more about the programs.

After further investigation, it turned out that the programs have been offered by Qwest since June 2000 when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established the programs in an effort to promote telephone service in underserved tribal areas. The effort by Qwest is to promote low-cost telephone service to the residents living on the more than 60 tribal lands in the 14-states region. If the residents qualify, they can pay for low-cost

telecommunications installation and as low as \$1 per month for telephone service. The 14 states are Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The guidelines to see if the residents qualify for the Tribal Lifeline and Tribal Link-up are that they participate in one of the following low-income programs:

- ▶ Medicaid
- ▶ Food Stamps
- ▶ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ▶ Head Start (Meeting Income Requirement)
- ▶ Tribally Administered Temporary Housing for the Needy Families
- ▶ Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance Program
- ▶ Federal Public Housing Assistance
- ▶ Low-income Home Energy Assistance
- ▶ National School Lunch Program
- ▶ Any other qualifying program approved by the state Lifeline and Link-Up programs.

Also, the individuals can qualify if their household income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty guidelines. They can receive a simple application from their own telephone companies or call Qwest at 1-800-244-1111. It can also be found at the Qwest website www.Qwest.com/TAP. Qwest also has special needs center that customers can call for as-

American Indians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech-disabled living on reservations in South Dakota who need to receive telephone services can contact the nearest CSD branch offices and the State office:

Sioux Falls Branch of CSD

3520 Gateway Lane
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
(866) 246-5759 Voice/TTY

Aberdeen Branch of CSD

1707 4th Ave. SE
Aberdeen, SD 57401
(605) 626-2668 Voice/TTY

Rapid City Branch of CSD

150 Knollwood Drive
Rapid City, SD 57701
(888) 304-2311 Voice/TTY

SD Dept. of Human Services

3800 Hwy 34 500 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501
(800) 265-9684 Voice/TTY
(605) 773-3195 Voice/TTY

assistance: **Center for Customers with Disabilities (800) 223-3131 Voice/TTY.**

This may be something for American Indians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Speech-disabled to look into getting telephone service. Then they can contact the Equipment Distribution Program in their state to receive telephone equipment which will meet their telecommunications needs. That will enable them to have full telephone accessibility.

Your feedback is important to us!

Did you just have a successful relay call and the CA did a fabulous job?

Did you have some challenges during a relay call and you feel that the CA might benefit from your feedback?

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are extremely valuable to us, as they help ensure the quality of the relay services we offer to you. Not only that, positive feedback means the whole world to a CA and brightens up their day! Even your feedback to help a CA improve for the next relay calls will be greatly appreciated. By providing specific infor-



mation using the example below, you will help us provide continuous training and specific feedback to our CAs.

Date of Relay Call: September 22, 2006

Time of Relay Call: 9:15 a.m. (Central time)

CA ID Number: CA 1234(F)

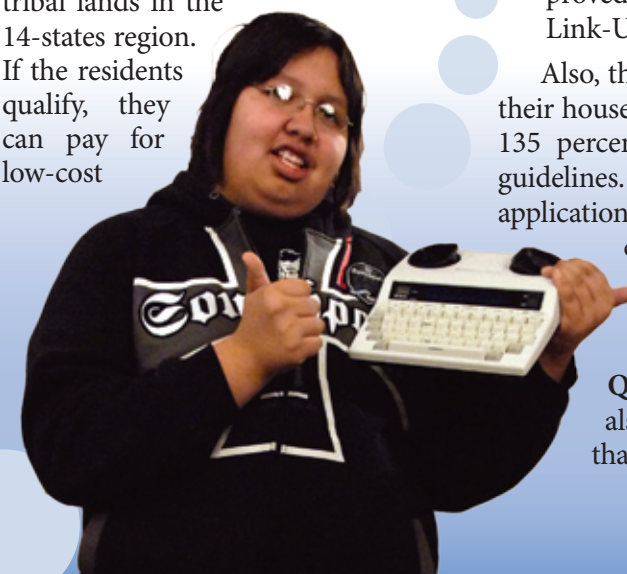
Comments: (be specific). This CA did a wonderful job relaying my call. She typed with no spelling errors, and typed efficiently and smoothly with a great positive attitude. My hearing friend felt like she was talking directly to me. Keep up the great work!

Please send your comments to:

Clarke Christianson
South Dakota TRS Outreach Manager
102 N. Krohn Place
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

or email:

cchristianson@c-s-d.org





CLARKE'S COLUMN

by
**Clarke
Christianson**

Summer is behind us already! One will say “Hey time goes by so fast!” “Time flies!” or something to that effect and it is especially true in my case. Since the last issue of the newsletter, we did a total of a 16 booth exhibitions and presentations in different parts of South Dakota. The biggest exhibitions were at the Oglala Lakota Nations Powwow/Fair/Rodeo in Pine Ridge, the Brown County Fair in Aberdeen and the South Dakota State Fair in Huron. With this much exposure, the public is starting to learn more about our Relay South Dakota and how it can help Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Speech-disabled people have full telephone accessibility. Beside booth exhibitions and presentations, we now have four billboards advertising Relay South Dakota. They are located on I-90 west of Brandon, I-29 south near Elk Point, I-29 just south



of Brookings and I-90 west near Vivian so when you travel, be sure to be on the lookout for any of them.

We are currently running our ads on monthly basis in approximately 120 newspapers in both the East River and West River areas. Ads are being run in two Indian newspapers which are being circulated on all of the Indian reservations.



Airing of our 711 and Don't Hang Up campaigns is now in effect at the following radio stations: East River Area – KELO AM, KTWB FM, KRRO FM, KTWB FM, West River Area – KKLS 920AM and Pine Ridge /Rosebud/ Cheyenne River Reservations area – KILI Radio. Be sure to tune in to any one of the above-mentioned radio stations to listen to our 711 and Don't Hang up promotions.

The upcoming/tentative exhibitions and presentations to take place during the next few months are:

- ▶ **October 16 – 19 • Spearfish.** Booth exhibition at SD Employment Conference
- ▶ **October 24 • Redfield.** Booth exhibition at Health Fair
- ▶ **January 26 – February 4 • Rapid City.** Booth exhibition at Black Hills Stock Show

You are welcome to visit our booth if you happen to be in one of the towns mentioned above.



Relay South Dakota Profile: **DORIS STAMP**



Doris Stamp is the head trainer at the South Dakota Relay Center. She is responsible for teaching new communications assistants and updating the training of experienced staff to provide relay customers with the best possible quality of service.

Doris Stamp has been working at the South Dakota Relay Center for five years. She first started her career as a communication assistant and is currently the head trainer. Her job is not only training the employees before they take their first live calls, but also to ensure that the center is meeting the state's expectation — which is providing the customer the best quality of service they could find!

Not many people are aware that Doris is rapidly losing her own hearing to Meniere's disease, a disease of the inner ear; which is why working at relay is very important to her. Doris feels good knowing that she has a hand in passing on her enthusiasm for the job and knowing she can feel comfortable using the service a few years from now, because she will have been instrumental in teaching agents the best way to provide quality service.

Many people feel that all you have to do is type and talk in order to work at relay, but there is much more to the job. It's knowing proper procedures, processing many different call types, and most important, providing equal access to communication services for our customers.

Doris was born in Huron, S.D. but raised in Watertown, S.D. She holds an associates degree in business from Mount Marty College in Yankton, S.D. and also received a bachelor's degree in health care administration from Presentation College in Aberdeen, S.D. in 1995. Doris has been living in Sioux Falls for five years and has been married to her husband Garry for 25 years.

Relay South Dakota **Tips & Hints**

Relay South Dakota is taking steps to ensure that our customers receive the best quality service. Relay now will be able to ask up front if the customer would like to hold for a live person when a recording (not an answering machine) is reached, instead of automatically typing the entire recording. This benefits the customer in saving time since the Communications Assistant doesn't need to type the recorded message, which may be very lengthy, but instead can get the customer connected to a live person in a timely manner. Of course if the customer wants the message typed, Relay would be more than happy to do that also.

Did you know that Relay will call Directory Assistance or Information for you upon your request? It is a

simple process and we are here to help you! You, as the customer, can give the operator all the information at the beginning of the call, or wait to speak to a Directory Assistance operator and give them the information. When the requested number is located, Relay will even dial that number for you without you having to retype it.

A little known piece of information that customers may find interesting is that you can set up your own database so that Relay will have that information at their fingertips when you call. This saves you time typing your preferences every time you make a call. Some of the things that you can put in your database notes are:

Don't type answering machine messages

Male/Female agent only
Slow typing down to XX words per minute

Spanish operator

Another thing you can put in your database is a frequently dialed list. The computer will store numbers that you call frequently so all you have to do is request that Relay call “Mom” or “Fred” etc.

It is also possible to block your caller ID when placing calls. This can be set up to block your ID on every call, or upon request.

You can also set up your database to always bill your long distance company for every long distance call. That way you don't have to retype the name of the company every time you place a long distance call.