



TTY/TDD with wireless network? Yes you can!

by Clarke Christianson

The rules as stated in the Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), require that telecommunications manufacturers and service providers make their products and services accessible to people with disabilities, if readily achievable. Also, the FCC ordered the wireless industry to make their digital systems compatible with TTYs/TDDs by June 30, 2002. Since then, the list of Section 255 manufacturers of equipment and list of service providers has grown and can be checked at the following websites: www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/section255_manu.html and www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/service_providers.html. For your information, a brief summary of the changes is provided for your use.

The availability of TTY-compatible digital cell phones and TTY-compatible digital wireless networks is increasing every year and now there are several portable TTYs on the market which can be hooked up to over 35 different cell phones with TTY modes! The three major TTY/TDD manufacturers now offer products —Ameriphone's Q90 TTY, Krown's PocketComm and Ultratec's Compact/C

TTY & EzCom Pro TTY—that can be used with cell phones.

A TTY device can also be used to access your automobile's communications system. General Motors (GM) is partnering with OnStar to implement enhanced wireless TTY services to deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired consumers at little or no additional cost. Portable TTYs can be hooked up to the OnStar system in the 2007 GM vehicles that are currently eligible for this enhanced TTY service.

This service isn't not only limited to GM, how-



Portable automotive TTY equipment, like this system from Onstar, allows deaf, hard of hearing and speech disabled auto owners to access their car's built-in communications system.

ever. Lexus is another vehicle manufacturer offering a TTY access program, which started in December, 2006. This TTY access program includes Bluetooth phone, wireless service, GPS satellite signals and vehicle electrical system (including battery).

There are other vehicle manufacturers offering what are called mobility programs through which people with disabilities can request specific accommodations to be made to their vehicles. The cost of these accommodations can be up to \$1,000, so before ordering these options check with your auto dealer. For more information about automotive TTY capabilities, please contact your auto manufacturer or dealership.

Whatever auto-related TTY options you choose,

the safety of you and your passengers will be enhanced while on the road because of this service and because of the widening access to Relay South Dakota throughout the state.

As you can see, even though more of us are using other modes of wireless telecommunications such as pagers, PDAs, and video-phones, TTYs are still being incorporated into wireless technology in different capacities. Relay South Dakota can be accessed while outside of the home, thanks to the advances in today's technology. For more information on telecommunications equipment, please contact the nearest CSD branch offices or the South Dakota Department of Human Services. Office contact information is included in the box on this page.

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)

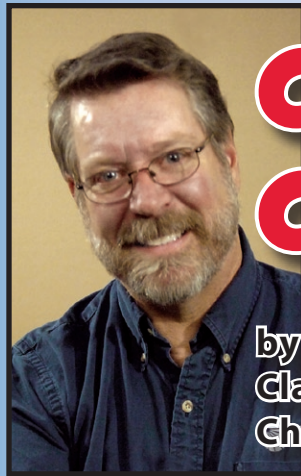
Comments: (be specific). This CA did a wonderful job relaying my call. She typed with no spelling errors, and typed efficiently and smoothly with a great positive attitude. My hearing friend felt like she was talking directly to me. Keep up the great work!

Please send your comments to:

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or email:

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CLARKE'S COLUMN

by
**Clarke
Christianson**

Over two days at the NASRA conference, there was a series of speakers talking about issues pertaining to Telecommunications Relay Services such as updates by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); what sort of preparations the relay services providers need to do in times of pandemic disasters (outbreak of avian flu); and Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)'s briefings about critical issues on which TDI will be working. There was also a showcase of some of the latest telecommunications technology and services.

The TEDPA conference also included two days of speakers and forums, such as how the states can keep up with the changing technology and changing of funding to meet growing demands. Equipment vendors had the opportunity to exhibit and give presentations on their latest equipment and technology.

The Don't Hang Up campaign is starting to pick up momentum as people are contacting my office about their frustrations with businesses hanging up on them. In turn, folders containing helpful information on how to handle relay calls, what to do when fraud calls are received and additional information about Relay South Dakota are being sent to those businesses. In addition, a presentation was made to a group of receptionists' supervisors in different medical offices in the Rapid City area. If any of you experience hang up situations, please go into www.sdrelay.com and fill out a form to be sent to me. Also, I welcome requests to come and give presentations to your group or organization.

Since the fall edition of Relay South Dakota newsletter was printed, I have had the opportunity to attend two national conferences: the National Association of State Relay Administrators (NASRA) and the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Administration (TEDPA) in Louisville, KY. Janet Ball, the state administrator of Deaf Services in Pierre, also attended. It was almost like an "old home reunion" as I got to meet some of my former colleagues again. It was during my former years as administrator of Deaf Services under the South Dakota Department of Human Services that I was a member of both above-mentioned organizations and I once again was given the opportunity to network with these colleagues.

Relay South Dakota Profile: **Stacy Tople, Regional HR Manager**

Stacy Tople joined CSD Relay of South Dakota in May 2005 as their Human Resource Manager and since that time she has provided support to centers in Minnesota and Texas as well. Stacy received her B.A. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology with a Minor in Human Resources from Minnesota State University, Mankato in the spring of 1999. After graduating, Stacy relocated to Sioux Falls where she attained a position at Sioux Valley Hospital. Stacy's experience includes six years of working in the Human Resources Department at Sioux Valley Hospitals and Health System as a Benefits Specialist.



Stacy Tople has worked in human resources at Relay South Dakota for the past year and a half.

In looking for ways to broaden her human resource body of knowledge, Stacy came across the HR Manager position at CSD Relay. At Relay, Stacy enjoys most aspects of the HR profession, from recruiting to employee relations. During the past year-and-a-half years

field, and gain first hand experience in many aspects of the job.

When asked what she enjoys most about working at Relay, Stacy responded, "The variety of the work within HR, it's never a dull day; also the genuine and caring attitudes shown by co-workers and staff."

During her free time Stacy enjoys playing volleyball several times a week and staying physically active by running and dancing. Stacy enjoys listening to live music, preferably some good electric blues. When not listening to music, Stacy also sings both at church and with an occasional try on the karaoke machine. Being a native Minnesotan, Stacy also cheers for her favorite football team, the Minnesota Vikings! She is involved in her church's personnel committee working out HR issues within the church and is also a member of the Sioux Empire Junior Chamber. Stacy resides in Sioux Falls with her husband Andrew.

Stacy has had opportunities to broaden her knowledge of the human resources

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Relay South Dakota **Tips & Hints**

Ordering pizza —quick and easy

Did you know that you can provide Relay information before you place your call and the communications assistant (CA) will relay the information to the person who answers the phone without answering several questions back and forth? It can all be done at the beginning of the call. This is primarily done on what are called dispatch calls to pizza places, take out food, or taxi companies. You provide your name, address, phone number, and order/destination to the CA and that is given to the person who answers the phone right away. If you frequently call for pizza, take-out food, or taxis, it is a quick and easy way to get the call done fast and efficiently without having to type back and forth.

Answering machine retrieval

The light is flashing on your answering machine, letting you know there are messages, but no one is at

home who can help you listen to those messages. Relay can! It is a simple call process called "answering machine retrieval" and it allows the CA to retrieve your messages for you and type them back on your TTY or VCO phone. All you need to do is call into Relay and say "Relay can you get my messages from my answering machine." or something similar, then the CA will give you very simple instructions that allow them to hear your messages. When the messages are finished, all you do is type or say "GA" and the CA will begin typing back your messages. There's no need to wait for someone to get home before you hear your messages.

If there is a phone number within a recording, you can have Relay dial that number for you without having to retype or repeat it. Just type/say, "Relay, dial that number," and the CA will be more than happy to place the call. Unfortunately, if there is more than one number within the recording, you will have to type or say which number you need.