

Postponed

SRT'S ANNUAL MEETING POSTPONED!

NEW DATE

Thursday | October 1, 2020

ND State Fair Center | Minot

SRT Nomination of Directors Update /

The Nomination of Directors Petition Forms are delayed. Petitions were not available in April, as originally scheduled. Those interested in running for the SRT Board of Directors will be able to acquire a petition on Monday, August 3, 2020. Petitions must be returned no later than Monday, August 31, 2020 by 5:00 pm. More details will be posted to srt.com.

Thank you for being an SRT member and we look forward to seeing you in October!

BUSINESS (ALMOST) AS USUAL

As a technology driven company, SRT was well prepared to transition during COVID-19 from the way we conducted our normal day-to-day business to a new normal, with minimal effect on the services we provide.

The first step to keep our employees and members safe was to allow employees to work from home. While many were



BUSINESS (ALMOST) AS USUAL cont.

already set up for this opportunity, our IT team quickly set up additional departments for work from home. At the peak, up to 70% of office employees were telecommuting without altering customer interactions.

As more and more customers started staying home and a decision was made to close the customer lobby, hundreds of people signed up for SmartHub, which allows you to pay your bill online. Internet technicians were able to drop equipment at a customer's door and video chat with them to install a modem in the home.

Meetings were held virtually and we even conducted our first ever virtual board meeting with all 12 board members as well as key staff joining together on a video conference. While in person training conferences were canceled, we turned to online educational opportunities to keep informed.

When many other aspects of life slowed down, we saw record internet usage as people worked from home (yet we never approached our max capacity), distance learning started, and people looked to technology for entertainment. We are proud of the way SRT employees and customers managed the rapid changes we have all faced, but we look forward to seeing you again!



CURBSIDE CONNECTIONS

Cafés and restaurants are the heart of many communities. They are where we go to catch up with friends. Locally owned, they are a first job for many. When the effects of COVID-19 forced them to close their doors, these small-town treasures faced uncertainty and communities lost some of their connection. As restaurants jumped into action and transitioned to phone orders and curbside take out, we saw a chance to not only help the businesses but keep that sense of community connection.

During April and May, SRT worked with nearly 20 restaurants throughout the area to provide over 2,000 free meals. While most of these meals were available to anyone in the area, it was especially gratifying to provide suppers prepared especially for first responders and seniors.



"We haven't been able to be in the communities we serve and see our customers face to face, but we hope by providing free meals we help bring people together (from a distance) to support these restaurants, which are vital to our communities," said Allan Engh, SRT board president. "We look forward to getting out to visit with everyone again someday."

CONGRATULATIONS, SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Congratulations to all graduating high school seniors and best of luck in the future!

The 2020 Scholarship recipients are:



Landry Maragos

Minot High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of
Mike & Sheila Maragos
Minot, ND
Chad & Shanel Effertz
Velva, ND



Erika Neshem

Lewis & Clark -
Berthold School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of Keith and
Amy Neshem
Berthold, ND



Neeleigh Wollenzien

TGU Towner High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of Benjamin and
Breanna Wollenzien
Towner, ND



Becca Tschetter

Minot High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of Greg and
Nancy Tschetter
Minot, ND



Jericho Limke

Lewis & Clark -
Berthold School
\$2500 Technical Scholarship
Son of Brad and Tina Limke
Carpio, ND



The KMOT Ag Expo

The KMOT Ag Expo celebrated its 49th year and gave SRT employees a chance to meet with local farmers and ranchers. SRT also sponsored the Living Ag Classroom, where area 4th grade students attended different booths to learn about agriculture and commodities ranging from how crops are grown in North Dakota and their uses around the country to how honey is made by bees and how the pollination process works.



Souris Valley United Way held their **5th Annual Little Black Dress Campaign** and SRT employees were glad to participate. The ladies of Team SRT wore the same black dress or outfit for four days to raise awareness for women in need within the community. This event also aims to raise funds for a local cause. This year's beneficiary was Full Steam Ahead's "Girls Who Code," a new program that encourages young girls to try coding and other technology-based fields that typically have a shortage of women. The Little Black Dress Campaign was able to raise \$2,835 for this empowering program!



The Minot Association of Builders hosted their **Home and Garden Show** in March. Not only does this show give our technology experts a chance to visit with customers about security systems, video cameras, and smart home automation options such as smart thermostats, smart light controls, and overhead garage door controls, we also answered questions about our other services like high speed internet.



SRT Board member, John Marshall, presented a check to Carol Peterson and Glenna Johnson of the **Bantry Cemetery** to fund the installation of new benches for cemetery visitors. SRT worked with the Rural Development Finance Corporation for a match grant of \$500. In total, Bantry Cemetery received \$1,000 towards the project.



A Single Community with One Long Main Street

How BAND, EduTech, and local schools work together to prepare North Dakota students for the future

In a middle school classroom in rural North Dakota, students crowd around a video camera and wave excitedly. Waving back at them from the projector screen at the front of the room is another class of students, in another middle school. The two classrooms are all but mirror images of one another: similar laminate desks, similar pre-teen chatter, similar brightly colored posters on the walls.

The difference? One classroom is in Mexico.

Virtual “pen-pal” relationships like this one are being formed in schools across North Dakota. Partner classrooms are often located in states and countries where North Dakota sends natural gas, coal, soybeans, and other exports. By communicating with their “pen-pals” through video chat, vlogs, podcasts, and other digital formats, students not only learn about the economy in North Dakota but the economies it impacts around the world.

Learning opportunities like these would have been unimaginable two decades ago when Kirsten Baesler served as a Technology Integration Specialist at Bismarck Public Schools. At the time, educators struggled to communicate via dial-up internet with schools across town, let alone across the globe.

“There were technology deserts that existed building to building, district to district,” Kirsten said.



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These “technology deserts” are areas that are not connected to the Internet or, as a result, the rest of the world. Not too long ago, North Dakota had some of the largest technology deserts in the country—hundred-mile stretches of state unable to enjoy the benefits of modern technology because of their rural location.

Today, Kirsten Baesler is in her second term as the State Superintendent of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. She oversees the 78 school districts that are operating in 470-plus buildings across the state of North Dakota and supports the nearly 120,000 students they serve.

She recognizes that virtual “pen-pal” partnerships, as well as countless other educational opportunities, would not be possible for students—especially in rural areas—without the high-quality, dependable broadband provided by the 18 member organizations that make up the Broadband Association of North Dakota (BAND).

“When we had the opportunity to scale out our broadband

connectivity to all of our schools, it removed the technology deserts in our state, and it opened up the opportunity of equity for our schools,” she said. “Without that connectivity to our rural school districts, we would continue to have the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ as far as classroom technology.”

Creating equal access to technology in all North Dakota schools has been a collaborative effort; widespread broadband access would be of no benefit to North Dakota schools if the schools did not know how to best use it to serve students. Where BAND has laid the foundation, EduTech has provided the tools and materials needed to build a state-wide, one-of-a-kind classroom technology system in North Dakota.

EduTech is a state agency under the supervision of the North Dakota Information Technology department that provides technological support and instruction to all K-12 schools in North Dakota. This is unlike many other states’ structures, in which districts provide IT service internally.

Resources offered by EduTech include day-to-day support for PowerSchool, the software utilized by schools to manage instruction, grading, attendance, and finances; cybersecurity support and training for teachers, school leaders, and students; and professional development to inform educators on how to use data to better inform their instruction.

While serving as State Superintendent for the past six years, Kirsten has seen how other states are navigating technology in education—and gained a new appreciation for EduTech along the way.

“I have seen first-hand how fortunate we are to have the vibrant, robust program of EduTech providing these services to all of our school districts in the state,” she said.

“What they have done, especially in a rural state like North Dakota, is help teachers leverage the tool of technology and meet students where they are at in their learning journey.”

And virtual “pen-pal” assignments are just one way that North Dakota schools are leveraging technology to support their curriculum. Teachers rely on high-speed broadband connections to deliver adaptive assessments on laptops and tablets. They not only allow, but encourage students to use the Internet to seek out additional information on their lessons.

All, Kirsten says, in the hope of preparing students for their future in an increasingly connected world.

“Without broadband, our students wouldn’t be allowed to be as curious as they need to be in order to be a 21st-century learner,” she said. “We are going far beyond just measuring test scores in reading, math, and science. We’re looking for students that are super engaged, that are not only turning their homework in on time,

but are actually looking for more information about that subject area. They are watching videos on YouTube to support their curiosity about a science project or an economics lesson.”

Every school in North Dakota is using technology in different ways to best suit their own students. At Westhope Public School, students are able to access Zoom meetings and Google Classroom from home to learn and keep in touch with their teachers and classmates.

Martin Bratrud, Superintendent for the school, has seen first-hand the impact that opportunities like this have had on students in his community.

“The students we are teaching will be applying for jobs that don’t even exist today. We need to make sure that we are preparing them to learn, be open and curious, to ask good questions and answer those questions,” Bratrud said. “Now, more than ever, that wouldn’t be possible if it weren’t for the internet we get from SRT for our students and families.”



To Kirsten, the collaborative efforts of BAND, EduTech, and local schools to provide the highest quality of education for students—no matter how rural—reflects what North Dakota is all about.

“When I think about North Dakota, I think about one community with a really long main street,” she said. “It is all one community working together to make sure that our students have what they need to prepare them for their future.”

Interested in seeing the impact your local broadband provider is making in your community? Check out our website [srt.com](https://www.srt.com)!

To learn more about BAND and your local broadband provider visit <https://www.broadbandnd.com/>



CONGRATULATIONS, RETIREES!

Gene Putnam

After 24 years at SRT, Gene is retiring on April 1st. Over the years, Gene has held a few different positions, most recently, and for the last 10 years, he has been a Product Manager. An interesting fact about Gene is that he has recently been inducted into the Dakota Musicians Association Hall of Fame. Gene has been an instrumental addition to the SRT team, and we are thankful for the years he has spent with us. We wish Gene the best in his retirement!



Bob Schnabel

Bob started his career at SRT 24 years ago as a Central Office Technician and retired on March 1st, 2020 in the same position. His cooperative career began at BEK Communications 10 years prior to SRT, also in the same position. In his retirement, he is looking forward to traveling more and spending more time riding his motorcycle with his son. Bob's expertise made him an excellent member of our team, and he will be missed. Congratulations, Bob!



Nancy Davis

Beginning May 1st, Nancy will retire from SRT after nearly 44 years of employment. She held several positions including Administrative Aid, Executive Secretary, and most recently, Human Resources Administrator. In her HR role, she oversaw the hiring of new employees, employee benefits programs, ensured legal compliance regarding state and federal requirements, and played a key role on the executive team. During retirement, she plans to spend time relaxing, gardening, scrapbooking, and spending time with her family and grandchildren. Nancy has been a very important member of the cooperative, and we are thankful for the years she spent with us. Best of luck, Nancy!

SUSANNE HOSKIN PROMOTED TO HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR

SRT is pleased to announce the promotion of Susanne Hoskin to Human Resources Administrator. In her new role, Hoskin will oversee the hiring of new employees, employee benefit programs, and ensure legal compliance regarding participation in state and federal government programs. She was previously a part of the Human Resources Department and looks forward to playing a key role on the executive team in her new position.



"We are proud to have been able to fill this position with a current SRT employee that we are confident will make an immediate positive impact on the company in her new role. Susanne has proven her dedication over the course of her time at SRT and has been furthering her education in preparation for her new role. We are glad to add her as a member of our executive staff moving forward" said SRT General Manager and CEO Steve Lysne.

Hoskin previously served as SRT's Safety and Training Coordinator. She has gained knowledge related to her new position, through continued education and hands on work experience. She replaces Nancy Davis, who retired.

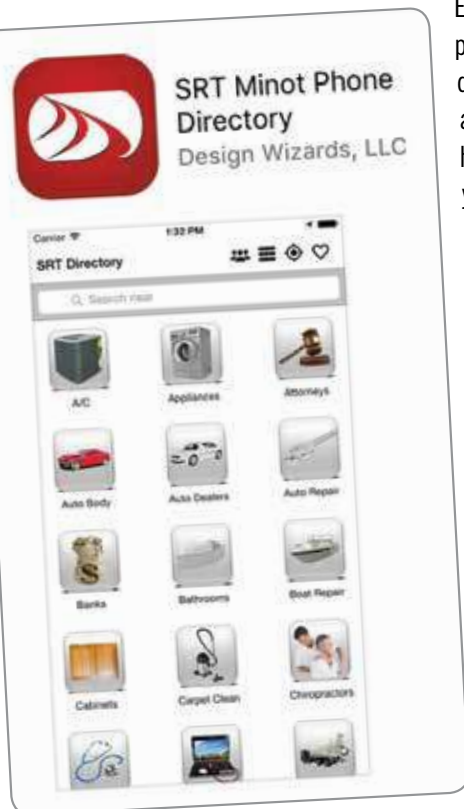
Susanne is an active board member and secretary of the Magic City Lions, a member of Minot Area Safety Association, and has been an SRT employee for 23 years. She is a Maxbass, North Dakota native and a graduate of Bismarck State College.

Stay Safe and Call Before You Dig!

Spring is here! As your construction projects commence, get the "dirt" on what is below and call before you dig! This quick, easy phone call can save money, time and even LIVES. You can also use ITIC (One Call Concept's ticketing software) to file your locate requests by visiting ndonecall.com.



PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS IN THE DIRECTORY!



Each year, nearly 100,000 SRT phone books are printed and delivered across our service area. Ads in this directory help customers to locate your business and help you to reach over 70,000 people local to this area. The online directory and mobile app create a microsite and digital presence along with offering links to your business' website and social media accounts. To download the directory app on your smartphone, search "SRT Minot Phone Directory" in the iTunes or Google Play store today. Ad sales are happening now, so call 1-800-510-9450 to be included in the 2020 SRT Directory!

STAY CONNECTED!

SRT services for individuals with disabilities

SRT offers a variety of products and services for customers with disabilities. These include:

- Large-button telephones
- LifeSentry Home Safety Systems
- Possible bill discounts for meeting eligibility requirements through the Lifeline program

We continue to work to provide products and services to meet the needs of all of our customers, including those with disabilities.

Additional Resources

In addition to products and services from SRT, the following agencies and businesses offer devices to assist persons with disabilities with their telecommunications needs.

- Relay North Dakota: a free service that provides full telephone accessibility to people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, and speech-disabled. Dial 711 to access this service, or visit www.relaynorthdakota.com for more information.
- North Dakota Vision Services: Provides products and services for the visually impaired, including Adaptive Aids (e.g., CCTV's, magnifiers, Talking Books) and technology resources. Call 701-795-2724 or visit www.ndvisionservices.com.
- State of North Dakota Disability Services Division: Help with assistive technology, independent living services and more. Call 701-328-8930 or visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/disabilities.

CAPITAL CREDIT RETIREMENT & ALLOCATION STATEMENTS

One of the benefits of being a member-owner of SRT is that you accrue capital credits for every dollar of business you do with the cooperative. The amount of excess revenues over costs, called margins, are allocated to the members.

The 2019 patronage margin allocated is \$6,033,937. This margin was allocated to members as capital credits based on a cooperative member's purchases during the year. Members should receive allocation statements in mid-June, which shows the balance of capital credits assigned.

The SRT Board of Directors has chosen to do a general retirement of capital credits and as such, \$1 million of the 2000 allocation will be retired, along with 10% of the 2019 allocation, which approximates to \$634,000. Checks will be sent in mid-June to Landline members who received allocations in the year 2000. Additionally, Landline and Internet members who receive allocations from 2019 may receive a check for their portion. SRT will continue to retire Capital Credits quarterly to Estates.



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This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Check Out What's Inside



SRT's Annual Meeting Postponed



Business (Almost) As Usual



BAND - The Broadband Association of North Dakota
Two Page Special Insert



Promote your Business in the Directory!

Make bill pay easy with



We understand that online bill pay can be intimidating, but we ensure the safest, most convenient experience possible.

Let us help!

1. Call Us
2. We will guide you through set up
3. Enjoy the convenience of control over your account

OR

Sign up!

1. Visit srt.com/smarthub or get the SmartHub app
2. Enter your name, email address and account number
3. Enjoy the convenience of control over your account

