



SAVE THE DATE

SRT ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 14, 2021

ND STATE FAIR CENTER

2005 BURDICK EXPY E. / MINOT, ND

The 2021 Annual Meeting may have some changes this fall in order to ensure our members' safety. While our business meeting is being planned for an in person meeting, dinner included, no live entertainment or kids activities are being planned at this time. Stay tuned for more details as we prepare for the cooperative business meeting in a safe manner.

SRT CEO/GENERAL MANAGER STEVE LYSNE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Chief Executive Officer/General Manager, Steve Lysne, will retire after 27 years with the organization. Lysne will retire at the end of the year. The cooperative's board of directors has begun the search for a new CEO/General Manager.



Lysne has served as CEO/General Manager since January 2003. Prior to that, he was the Chief Financial Officer for eight years. Known to many as a financial innovator, Lysne has been instrumental in strengthening the cooperative's current financial position, which will allow for the completion of SRT's fiber-optic build throughout its territory. Upon completion, approximately \$110 million will have been invested in SRT's network upgrade.

"Steve's decision-making throughout his tenure put our members' needs first, while his wealth of industry knowledge and financial acumen has taken this cooperative to a new level of success. On behalf of the board, we wish him nothing but the best in his well-deserved retirement," SRT Board President Allan Engh said.

Continued on next page

SRT SPONSORED STUDENT WINS NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

SRT is pleased to announce that a student from the SRT service area has been awarded a national scholarship from the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), in cooperation with NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. Out of 750 applications across the nation, Lillian Effertz of Velva High School was selected as the winner for the \$2,500 Good Neighbor Scholarship, which is "awarded to students who demonstrate what it means to be a "good neighbor" through humanitarianism, inclusion and kindness to others. Additionally, they must have demonstrated the ability to think bigger than themselves by supporting others within their community." Congratulations, Lillian!

Lillian Effertz

Velva High School
Good Neighbor
Scholarship

Daughter of Alan &
Monica Effertz
Velva, ND



SRT CEO/GENERAL MANAGER STEVE LYSNE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Continued from front cover

Throughout his time, Lysne guided the cooperative to build an independent wireless network that served north central North Dakota for 20 years. He also secured nearly \$90 million in loans from USDA's Rural Development Rural Utilities Service program to deliver fiber-optic technology to customers. Under Lysne's guidance, the cooperative has nearly doubled in assets from \$95 million in 2002 to \$180 million in 2020.

Lysne stated, "It has been a privilege to work for this cooperative, alongside the talented past and present employees. I would be remiss if I did not thank the SRT



Board of Directors for allowing me to lead the organization. It was my intent to be fiscally responsible with our members' equity while being a leader in the telecommunications space and offering the best services available.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have done that."

Lysne serves as a member of the DCN board of directors, vice-chair of Trinity Health, and president of the board for the North Dakota Telephone Association. Previously, he was president of the board of the Rural Wireless Association, a former board member on the Minot Area Development Corporation and former

board member of Integrity Mutual Funds. Lysne and his wife, Kari, look forward to spending time with their children and grandchildren.

PROCEDURE FOR THE NOMINATION OF DIRECTORS

The purpose of the SRT Annual Meeting is to elect directors to the Board of Directors and hold a business meeting of the cooperative. Directors are elected to serve a three-year term. SRT's twelve-member Board of Directors represent our service area throughout the year by attending monthly board meetings, serving on state associations, attending community events, and representing SRT on national telecommunications issues. Beginning August 16, 2021, the following steps must be taken if you are interested in becoming a candidate for election as an SRT director.

PROCEDURE STEPS:

1. A Nomination of Directors Petition Form, indicating the director district must be obtained from SRT Headquarters (principal office of the Cooperative) located at 3615 North Broadway in Minot.
2. Fifteen (15) or more members from the same district from which the nomination is being made must sign the written petition. Important Note: A husband and wife constitute one membership. Either spouse may sign this petition as a member. However, the signature of a husband and wife on this petition may only be counted as one of the fifteen (15) members necessary to nominate a director.
3. All nominations by petition must be received at SRT Headquarters located at 3615 North Broadway in Minot no earlier than August 16, 2021 nor later than September 13, 2021 by 5:00 PM. Petitions postmarked before September 13, 2021 but arriving by mail after September 13, 2021 cannot be accepted.
4. All nominations by petition are subject to verification of membership of signatories. Once verification is complete, the candidate will be notified and their name will appear on the ballot at SRT's Annual membership Meeting. Nominations for director candidates will not be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

TECHNOLOGY DRIVES FARMING SUCCESS

Earlier this spring, we visited with area farmers and agriculture industry professionals at the KMOT Ag Expo to discuss how they utilize technology in their operations. SRT's booth at the KMOT Ag Expo aims to showcase our fiber internet and how farms and ranches can connect to the world through high-speed internet, as well as demonstrate how surveillance cameras assist with farming and ranching. While SRT provides the backbone for internet connectivity, we recognize it is the operators of these advances in the machinery, data, and equipment who are the true stars in today's agricultural world. Jim Campbell of Gooseneck Implement stated, "There was a time when there was just farming, then there was precision agriculture, now it is back to farming. There is no longer non-precision farming, it's all just farming." And for SRT, that change has highlighted the importance of staying connected at all times.



According to Campbell, two decades ago farmers focused on managing their farm. A decade ago, farmers focused on managing specific fields, with advances in technology allowing them to narrow data and information to improve each field. Today, farmers can focus on managing specific plants because of their access to real-time data, technology advancements, and precision agriculture. (Cue the internet here.)

Data collection and analysis is one of the largest advancements in farming that has allowed the industry to turn a corner in efficiency and effectiveness. Internet connections play a key role in this and

Katie Wirt, Customer Success Manager at Farmers Edge, talked about how her role is easier thanks to internet connectivity. Wirt described the process of uploading, collecting, and analyzing data for farmers and how that impacts the success of yields. Katie's job is to ensure that her customers are getting all the information about what is working, what is not working, and how crops are responding to changes in conditions to allow them the opportunity to fix issues that they otherwise may not have known were happening until it was too late. Satellite imagery and drone use play a key role, allowing the farmers to see and analyze the data, sometimes without having to set foot in the field.

"You need as much data as you can get to be as efficient as possible", said Charlie Adams, Hefty Seed Company. Access to the data allows Adams to make suggestions, adjustments, and improvements to the products they offer to increase and improve yields.

Adams is embracing each update to technology in the farming industry because he acknowledges the positive impact it makes on output and efficiency, which is what he wants for each farmer that he does business with. As he put it, "If it doesn't work for the farmer, it doesn't work for us."

As we look at the future of farming and the role technology plays, the experts we spoke with expect significant increases in the use of artificial intelligence and automation to increase output and efficiency, and SRT realizes that the need to be connected through internet is a role we are proud to support.

ROBOCALL MITIGATION – SRT MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM FRAUDULENT TELEPHONE CALLS

Landline phones have often been the target of illegal and spoofed robocalls. In order to combat these fraudulent calls, Congress ordered the Federal Communications Commission to implement the TRACED Act to stop bad actors. One of these programs, Robocall Mitigation, is a protection program meant to warn SRT customers of incoming fraudulent/spoofed telephone calls.

A call is considered a robocall if you answer the phone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person. If the call is trying to sell you something, it's often a scam or illegal. While some robocalls

such as your doctor's office calling to remind you of an upcoming appointment are legitimate, most are not. SRT will use a program in our network to monitor a telephone number's reputation. If the number has a poor reputation, it may be presented as spam or fraud. This is one of multiple protection programs SRT is working on to ensure that telephone numbers maintain their integrity and people stop being victimized by these bad actors. For more information on Robocall Mitigation, please visit www.srt.com

SRT EMPLOYEES RECEIVE EAGLE AWARDS

Congratulations to Combination Technician Brady Keller and Customer Service Representative Laurie Mock! Both employees received a Minot Chamber EDC Eagle Award for great customer service.

Brady was nominated by Shannon who writes, "Brady came to my home to install WiFi. He was actually early and no one was home so he said, "Oh, we'll just make another call first and come back." My daughter was supposed to be home but was running late when they came back but the front door was open so I told him he could go inside. We have two small dogs who sometimes bark at strangers so when I got to the house I apologized for them. He was as nice as could be--said the dogs were no problem and he just got to work. When my daughter got home and I left, he explained everything to her on which equipment needed to be returned to the previous provider. I was very impressed by this young man's patience, expertise and customer service."



Laurie was nominated by Connie who writes, "My father lives in a nursing home and was diagnosed with COVID for the second time. This time he felt fine, no symptoms, and was not happy to be placed in isolation. The isolation rooms did not have phones. Dad had to ask for the nursing station cell phone when he wanted to make a call and it wasn't always available to him. This was his only way to contact my mother who lives in the opposite end of the building in assisted living. They were not allowed to cross sides. He called her several times a day. I called SRT and was referred to Laurie. I explained the situation to her and asked if there was some way they could activate the jack in the isolation room (without going into the isolation room) and connect the line to Dad's number. It wasn't long after the phone call that it was done. His phone was brought into his isolation room and at least part of normalcy was returned to him. Very important in these times. Thank you so much Laurie for taking the ball and running with it!"



CONGRATULATIONS, SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

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

The 2021 Scholarship recipients are:



Emma Dragseth

TGU Towner
High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of Doug & Jennifer
Dragseth
Towner, ND



Joslyn Nordmark

Mount Pleasant
High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of Jason & Audrey
Nordmark
Rolla, ND



Kamryn Morrison

South Prairie
High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Daughter of
Denalie Morrison
Minot, ND



Lucas Webb

Minot High School
\$1500 Scholarship

Son of Anthony &
Tina Webb
Minot, ND



Wyatt Hanson

Velva High School
\$2500 Technical Scholarship

Son of Michael Hanson &
Maria Effertz-Hanson
Velva, ND

CONGRATULATIONS, RETIREES!

Maxine Rossow

On February 1st, Maxine retired after nearly 25 years at SRT. During that time, she worked as an Account Executive, selling SRT services to business customers. She mentioned that one of her favorite aspects of her job was being able to work with so many awesome people that turned into friends. She reiterated many times how thankful she is to each and every customer that she was able to work with and build relationships with. In retirement, Maxine plans to spend a lot of time traveling, quilting, and reading. Best of luck in your retirement, Maxine!



Kelly Wetzel

On February 1st, Kelly retired after 26 years at SRT. He began his journey as a cable splicer, then transitioned to an Outside Plant Engineer in 2005 and remained there until his retirement. Kelly and his wife, Julie, have two children. His son Taylor is pursuing an accounting degree, and his son Jayden is interning as a pastor and lives in Devils Lake with his wife Megan. Moving forward, Kelly plans to continue officiating football, basketball and baseball, do some traveling, and work on his golf game. We wish you the best in your retirement!



SRT AND RDFC TEAM UP TO RESTORE HISTORY

SRT Communications, Inc. is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in SRT's service area are eligible to apply for a grant for community-based projects. RDFC makes these funds available in order for more people to become aware of their larger loan program that funds community-based projects and non-profit entities with low-interest loans.



"This program has allowed SRT to fund additional projects in our communities and create an even larger impact with our giving. RDFC is a valuable program, and we are happy to match funds for these worthy projects," said Steve Lysne, SRT CEO/General Manager.

RDFC recently awarded a \$1,000 grant to the City of Sherwood and SRT matched those funds with an additional \$1,000 donation. The Main Street Revival project in Sherwood will enhance the community by restoring the original town jail which was built in the 1920s. The building is deteriorating in its current location and will be moved to Main Street and restored to its original character. The building is a part of the city's history and will be used for community activities.

For more information on the Rural Development Corporation Grant Program, and SRT's partnership, visit srt.com/srtcares under Community Development.

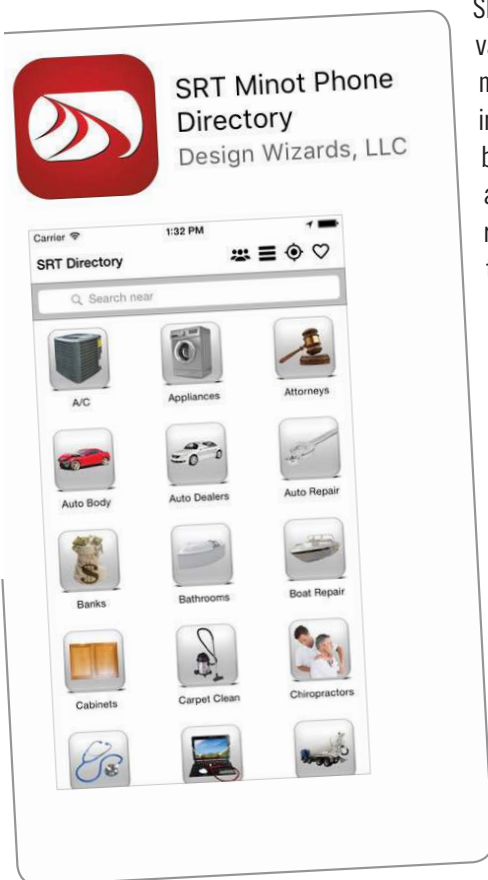
CASSIDY HJELMSTAD NAMED CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Cassidy Hjelmstad was promoted to chief marketing officer (CMO) at SRT. Hjelmstad joined the cooperative in 2010 as the director of corporate communications. She will continue to lead SRT's corporate communications and customer service and billing department while assuming the additional responsibilities of corporate officer.

In her time at SRT, Cassidy has been instrumental in leading teams to implement effective strategies for product sales growth and exceptional member experience. With her data driven approach, Cassidy has directed marketing, education efforts, and digital strategy to increase customer acquisition and satisfaction on SRT's growing fiber optic network.



PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS IN THE DIRECTORY!



SRT phone books are a valuable resource for many, whether it's finding information in the physical book or on the mobile app. The directory is a reliable tool for businesses to advertise. 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 2022 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 Board of Directors approved the 2020 allocation for the amount of \$9,486,321. This amount was allocated to members as capital credits based on a cooperative member's purchases during the year. Members should receive allocation statements in 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, \$2 million of the 2000 allocation will be retired, along with \$1,340,000 from the 2020 allocation. 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 2020 may receive a check for their portion. SRT will continue to retire Capital Credits quarterly to Estates.

5 EFFECTIVE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WIFI



Whether you have a house with kids who can't help but run their WiFi gadgets all at once or if you're just getting into the smart gadget world yourself, we have compiled a few helpful tips to have a better WiFi experience in your home.

1. Turn Your Modem Off Then Back on Again

As simple as it sounds, sometimes all your WiFi needs is a modem reboot. Like other electronic devices like your smart phone and computer, when a modem is on 24/7 sometimes it just needs a power cycle to get things working properly again. Simply turn off or unplug your modem from the wall outlet, wait 30 seconds to 1 minute, and then plug it back in. Once you see green lights, you'll know the modem is back up and the WiFi is ready to go!

2. Hardwire Devices When Possible

Many use the terms WiFi and internet interchangeably, but there is a difference. Internet is the service itself, and WiFi refers to a way of accessing the internet, usually through wireless devices like your cell phone, tablet, or any smart gadgets labeled as "WiFi." Sometimes certain devices work better when they are hardwired, or rather, having a cable run from your modem directly to the device. Some great suggestions for devices that do well when hardwired are gaming consoles like Xbox and Playstation, Smart TVs that stream apps like Netflix and Hulu, or even your computer if you do a lot of gaming or watch videos. Having certain devices hardwired helps eliminate some interference that naturally occurs with WiFi and allows for faster speeds to the hardwired devices.

3. Turn Off Devices When Not in Use

If a device like a computer, smart phone, tablet, or Smart TV are still powered on even when you're not using them, they can still use up some of your WiFi and bog down your speed in that way. If a device is not being used, it's best to turn it off. For example, even if a tablet's screen is locked, it still can use WiFi when backing up to cloud services or performing background activity like automatic updates. Bonus: you may even save some electricity by getting in the habit of turning off Smart TVs and computers when not in use rather than leaving them run in the background. Now that's a win!

4. Request a WiFi Assessment

Have you noticed certain rooms in your home just don't get the same connection to the WiFi as others, and seem slower? If this is the case, you may be a good candidate for a WiFi Assessment. We offer whole home WiFi as part of your SRT Internet service, which means we want to do our very best to give you good WiFi coverage in your home, which may require additional equipment called access points. Call our customer service at 701-858-1200 to set up a free WiFi Assessment for your home!

5. Still Unsure? Call Our 24/7 Internet Help Desk!

Sometimes you have tried everything, and things just don't want to cooperate. When in doubt, call our Internet Help Desk. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days week, 365 days a year and are here for you when your WiFi and internet is giving you trouble. They can be reached at 701-858-7873, or via online chat at srt.com/chat for your convenience.

We hope these tips and tricks will help you feel like a WiFi expert in no time. As always, feel free to call or chat with us if you have any questions regarding your SRT Internet.



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"SRT.news" is published three times per year from SRT, Minot, ND
Cassidy Hjelmstad, Editor
This institution is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Check Out What's Inside



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October 14, 2021



Tips to Maximize WiFi



Technology in Farming



Promote your Business
in the Directory!

GET THE RIGHT INTERNET SPEED!

It doesn't have to be hard.
We can help!

Making the change is easy as 1-2-3.

1. Contact us
2. We'll help you pick the right package
3. Love your WiFi!

Get our **POPULAR** Social Package!

\$45⁹⁵
MO

Make the whole family happy!

SRT.COM/INTERNET

