

SRT NEWSletter

SRT PARTICIPATES IN LAUNCH OF STATE'S FIRST IMPROVED 911 SERVICES

North Dakota has deployed its first end-to-end Internet Protocol (IP) 911 service in support of the state's transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911). This transition from analog to IP-based connectivity means the system that carries emergency 911 calls will be more capable, faster, and less vulnerable to 911 service interruptions.

The North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo) contracted with Lumen to provide NG911 for all 911 call centers – known as public safety answering points (PSAPs) – in the state. Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) provides statewide network connectivity between 13 independent telecommunication companies and Lumen.

The NG911 network also requires a telecommunications switch to deliver individual calls to the 911 system and route each call to the appropriate PSAP. SRT Communications is the pilot telecommunications company and assisted with local network design. NDACo, DCN, and SRT collaborated to deliver end-to-end IP 911 calls from SRT subscribers to seven PSAPs.

Traditional 911 services use analog circuits to reach the state's 911 system. NG911 migrates that infrastructure to a flexible, secure broadband infrastructure that can carry a much broader range of communication signals such as text, picture, or video. The IP-based network allows information to flow seamlessly across the 911 system, from the public to first responders and beyond.



“SRT is proud to be part of the first deployment alongside DCN and NDACo. We are committed to public safety and have been integral to delivering critical emergency services to the most remote corners of our service area. The NG911 system leverages the latest technology to ensure 911 is available and reliable,” said Shawn Grosz, SRT’s Chief Technology Officer.

“The work done on behalf of DCN and piloted by SRT completes modernization work on the final portions of the 911 network still using analog technology,” said Jason Horning, Next Generation 9-1-1 Program Manager for NDACo. “We are grateful for their leadership and excited for the public to benefit from the improved reliability and the future opportunities that the new network design provides.”

Seth Arndorfer, DCN Chief Executive Officer, added, “911 is a critical service that must work every time. The rollout in SRT territory was flawless and we’re already working in other parts of the state, with anticipated statewide completion in third quarter 2024. Then, every North Dakotan – citizens and first responders – can be confident 911 connectivity will be there when they need it.”

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SENATOR CRAMER LEGISLATIVE STAFF VISITS SRT

Mary Silverthorn, Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer, visited SRT in Minot to chat, tour, and dig into the “fiber to the home” process.

Her visit included the opportunity to splice real fiber, a key phase that brings high-speed, reliable internet to each individual customer. Working off mapping records for every location in SRT’s territory, SRT splicer technicians connect thousands of pieces of “fiber” – strands of glass that carry internet and phone traffic – along buried routes. The fiber is fused from SRT’s central office headquarters to smaller offices throughout our service area and, ultimately, to the customer. By splicing fiber herself, Ms. Silverthorn experienced the precise work involved in connecting each home or business to our state-of-the-art fiber network – one at a time – across vast swaths of north-central North Dakota.

Ms. Silverthorn also toured SRT’s downtown office to see the systems required to support and deliver broadband throughout Minot and rural communities spanning thousands of square miles.

She met employees from operations, engineering, and IT disciplines and had the opportunity to ask a variety of questions about the fiber network.

“SRT appreciates Senator Cramer’s focus on telecommunications and broadband,” said Cassidy Hjelmstad, SRT CEO and General Manager. “We are always happy to show visitors how SRT and other telecommunications cooperatives work to bridge the digital divide across North Dakota. Many thanks to Mary for being so generous with her time. We enjoyed her visit!”



SRT PARTICIPATES IN LAUNCH OF STATE’S FIRST IMPROVED 911 SERVICES

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The faster, more flexible and efficient NG911 system offers benefits to callers and first responders alike. Callers can get help quickly from any device at any time, and first responders can share life-saving information instantly.

NDACo is a non-profit organization that supports counties in a variety of ways, including coordinating the state’s migration to NG911.

Dakota Carrier Network, created in 1996, is owned by 13 North Dakota-based independent broadband services providers. Combined, they serve nearly 400

communities and have more than 65,000 miles of fiber optic cable in service. DCN provides technology solutions to customers in business, government, and wholesale. DCN’s corporate headquarters is in Fargo, N.D., and its Network Operations Center (NOC) is in Bismarck, N.D. DCN Owner companies are BEK Communications, Consolidated Telcom, Dakota Central Telecom, Dickey Rural Communications, MLGC, North Dakota Telephone, Northwest Communications, Polar Communications, Red River Technologies, RTC Networks, SRT Communications, United Communications, and West River Telephone. www.dakotacarrier.com



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 3. Follow the steps to set up your account.
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SRT CARES



UNION SILOS – SRT Board members presented a check to organizers of the Union Silos public art project that will create the biggest mural in North Dakota.



SCHEELS COMPLEX AT SOUTH HILL RIBBON CUTTING – SRT employees joined fellow donors, Minot Parks, and the Minot Girls Fastpitch team to celebrate the new amenities, which include SRT GIG fiber and free public access WiFi.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT – SRT employees promoted safety and educated customers on high-speed internet options at the annual event.



RENNVILLE COUNTY FAIR – SRT sponsored the annual coin hunt at the Renville County Fair.



ND STATE PARADE – SRT employees and their families proudly walked and handed out frisbees and candy in this year's State Parade.



LORAIN CHARITY RIB COOK-OFF – SRT sponsored the 6th annual event at the Naked Moose II.



CO-OP DAY AT THE STATE FAIR – SRT Board members volunteered to serve pancakes to early morning fairgoers.



FREEDOM FEST – SRT supported the 5th Force Support Squadron's Freedom Fest on Minot Air Force Base.



DINNER ON THE PRAIRIE – SRT was a platinum sponsor of Dinner on the Prairie, where farmers and non-farmers alike shared a locally sourced meal together and learned about agriculture and farm-to-table practices that are happening in North Dakota.



CO-OP DAY AT THE STATE FAIR – SRT Board members served ice cream on a hot day at the North Dakota State Fair.



OCTOBER MARKS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Nationally recognized since 1964, this observance gives cooperatives the opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, inclusive communities. SRT is proud to fulfill co-op principles that focus on membership, community, education, and more.

Keep your eyes peeled during October for fun happenings to celebrate the mission and purpose of SRT as your cooperative!



STEM EXPO – SRT employees conducted a fun robotics activity for kids of all ages at the STEM Expo hosted by Minot Hot Tots.



SURREY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TRUCK DONATION – SRT Board members visited Surrey Fire Protection District to see the completed emergency vehicle donated by SRT.



TOWNER CRAZY DAYS – SRT Board members and employees served more than 150 banana splits at this year's event.



BANTRY UNION CEMETERY – SRT Board members held a check presentation honoring SRT's grant match with the Rural Development Finance Corporation. The cemetery used the funding to place stones at unmarked grave sites.



RECYCLE YOUR OLD DIRECTORY DATES COMING SOON!
Check SRT.COM for updates.

2024 SRT DIRECTORY COMING SOON

The 2024 SRT Phone Directory is coming soon! Be on the lookout for directory delivery starting mid-October. Need additional phone books?



2024 SRT Phone Directories will be available at these locations, free of charge:

AFB - Minot	North Star Community Credit Union	Kenmare	State Bank & Trust of Kenmare
Berthold.	State Bank & Trust of Kenmare	Max.	Max Farm Services / C-Store
Bottineau.....	First National Bank & Trust Company of Bottineau	Minot.....	SRT Headquarters
Burlington	United Community Bank	Mohall	MarketPlace Foods
Butte	Heritage Insurance Services	Newburg	Gate City Bank
Drake.....	United Community Bank	Newburg	Peoples State Bank
Glenburn.....	City Hall		Newburg Station
Harvey	First State Bank of Harvey	Sawyer.....	Sawyer City Hall
	Dakota Heritage Bank	Towner.....	Merchants Bank
		Velva.. ..	Peoples State Bank of Velva
		Westhope.....	Peoples State Bank

2023 SRT ANNUAL MEETING

The 2023 SRT Annual Meeting occurred Thursday, June 15, 2023, at the North Dakota State Fair Center in Minot. Nominations of directors' petitions were distributed and accepted at SRT's headquarters from April 17, 2023, through May 16, 2023. Five petitions were qualified and verified, which authorized the names to be placed on the official election ballots distributed at the meeting.

Four directors were elected to serve a three-year term on SRT's Board of Directors: District 1: Stanley Vangsness, Berthold; District 2: Kristi Miller, Maxbass; District 3: John Marshall, Towner; and District 4: Deanna Klein, Minot. Members also voted to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented.

Thank you for attending and for your membership with SRT.

2023 ELECTION RESULTS

District 1: (38 total votes)
 Stanley Vangsness 38
 Spoiled ballots..... 0

District 2: (59 total votes)
 Kristi Miller..... 57
 Spoiled ballots..... 2

District 3: (31 total votes)
 John Marshall 31
 Spoiled ballots..... 0

District 4: (445 total votes)
 Kriss J. Allard 170
 Deanna Klein 263
 Spoiled ballots..... 12

2023 Board of Director officer positions are as follows: Kristi Miller, President; Stanley Vangsness, Vice President; Stacey Diehl, Secretary/Treasurer; Tom Jespersen, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.



USDA Programs Encourage Rural Development in Partnership with SRT

SRT participates in the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. This federal program provides funding to create economic development opportunities in rural communities. SRT aids in the process by assisting with and monitoring loans to qualifying rural organizations.

The first recipient of the SRT REDLG program was the Mohall Ambulance Service in 2009 to fund a portion of a new emergency services building. Mohall Ambulance paid off the loan in 2019 and continues to offer emergency services to the community. In 2015, USDA provided a zero-interest REDLG pass-through loan to SRT for Gooseneck Implement in Velva, funding part of Gooseneck's new facility construction. Another zero-interest loan was awarded in 2017 to the United Rural Ambulance District in Berthold to assist in funding

a new ambulance services building for the community. The most recent loan was awarded to Precision Farm Parts in Sherwood to expand their business, which makes custom parts for farm equipment.

SRT is proud to support local economic development and encourages businesses to apply for the REDLG program. Applicants can apply for loans starting at \$5,000, for projects that bring economic development to the area.

The program is not meant to compete with local banks; instead, it is meant as a supplement to other financing options. SRT cannot be a lender of last resort. SRT offers a pre-application at www.srt.com/srtcares or by contacting Becky Towery at 701-858-5168.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

LIFELINE AND LINK UP

Lifeline is a government benefit program supported by the Universal Service Fund that provides a discount on broadband service for qualifying consumers. Lifeline helps ensure that eligible consumers have the opportunities and security that broadband service brings, including being able to connect to jobs, family, and emergency services.

Qualifying for Lifeline Support – Non-Tribal and Tribal

A consumer of SRT Communications must either have a household income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA) or Section 8
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) general assistance program
- Medicaid
- Veteran Pension & Survivor Pension Benefit
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

If you are requesting Lifeline on the basis of your household income, please refer to the Estimated Income Requirements for a Household at or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. You may find this chart, which is revised annually, on the United States Department of Health and Human Services, website at <http://aspe.hhs.gov>.

Important Notes for Eligible Consumers Nationwide

Lifeline is available for SRT broadband service. One discount per household is allowed. Lifeline is a government benefit program, and consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain the benefit can be punished by fine or imprisonment or can be barred from the program.

Tribal Link Up

Link Up assistance provides a 100% reduction (up to \$100) of the charge for starting telecommunications service at a Tribal Lifeline subscriber's primary residence. Link Up is available to subscribers who reside on Tribal lands and use a facilities-based service provider that receives High Cost program support. Link Up is a one-time benefit per address; subscribers can request Link Up once for each change of primary residential address.

For service initiation charges of up to \$200, Link Up also provides a deferred, no-interest payment plan to the subscriber for up to one year.

Minimum Service Standards

Broadband – speed of 25x3 Mbps, and usage allowance to 1280 GB. If 25x3 Mbps is not offered, any generally available residential package that meets the minimum service standard qualifies for Lifeline.

Lifeline Support Level Phase-Down

Lifeline support for landline telephones is no longer available per the FCC Phase Down. However, Broadband support remains at \$9.25, or until further notice.

How Can I Sign Up?

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is now using a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier to review an applicant's Lifeline eligibility. You can apply for Lifeline by visiting www.CheckLifeline.org by selecting your state in the drop down menu on that site. Once the National Verifier approves your application, contact SRT to activate your Lifeline benefits.

For more details, contact the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 voice, 1-888-835-5322 TTY, or by mail at FCC, 445 12th ST SW, Washington, DC 20554. You may also visit the FCC's website at www.fcc.gov and search for Lifeline.

Is Lifeline the same as Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

Lifeline is the FCC's permanent program to support affordable access to essential communications services such as broadband Internet access. The ACP is a new program designed to provide additional support to make broadband more affordable for certain low-income households.

ACP and Lifeline Are Separate Programs

Customer may have one ACP and one Lifeline benefit per household. Your Lifeline benefit and ACP can be combined and applied to the same service plan or applied to different service plans. You are not required to opt-in to the ACP, and you can continue to receive your Lifeline service without enrolling in the ACP. You may choose to take ACP benefits from a service provider other than your existing Lifeline provider.

CUSTOMER PROPRIETARY NETWORK INFORMATION

In the course of providing service to telephone customers, SRT collects information concerning the telephone services you purchase and how you use them. This information is known as “customer proprietary network information,” or “CPNI.” CPNI includes any information on the quantity, technical configuration, type, destination, location, and amount of use of your service that we obtain because we are your telephone carrier. CPNI does not include the names and telephone numbers published in telephone directories or information we obtain as a result of providing your other SRT services. We use CPNI to monitor the quality of the service we provide and to prepare your bills.

You have a right, and we have a duty, under federal law to protect the confidentiality of CPNI. We have the right under federal law to use your CPNI to provide telephone service, to bill you, to market services related to services you already buy from us, and to protect our facilities and property. You have the right to disapprove of our use of CPNI for marketing services other than those that are related

to services you already buy from us and to withdraw access to CPNI at any time. Withdrawing access to CPNI will not affect our ability to provide telephone services to you, or the quality of the service we provide.

If you want to restrict use of your CPNI, you must contact SRT at 701-858-1200 within 30 days of receipt of this notice. Your denial or approval for SRT to use this data will not affect the provision of any services to which you subscribe. You may change your decision at any time and your decision will remain valid until you tell us otherwise. Again, we will only use your account information to market other telecommunications services and products SRT offers, and no action is required unless you wish to restrict our use of your CPNI. You will still receive monthly bill inserts, newsletters, and other publications that are sent to all customers so that you are kept up to date on what is happening at SRT.

STOP TELEMARKETING CALLS

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) launched the National Do Not Call Registry to give Americans a choice about getting telemarketing calls at home.

To register your number on the Internet: logon to www.donotcall.gov and click on Register Now. If you register online, you will receive an email from www.donotcall.gov as part of the confirmation process and you will need to click on the link in that email within 72 hours after you receive it to complete your registration.

To register your number by telephone: call 1-888-382-1222; TTY call 1-866-290-4236. You must call from the number you want to register.

After 31 days, most telemarketing calls will stop. However some calls are not covered, such as:

- calls from, or on behalf of political organizations, charities, and telephone surveyors

- calls from companies with whom you have an existing business relationship
- calls from companies you've given permission to call

Once you register, your registration will not expire. Telephone numbers placed on the National Do Not Call Registry will remain on it permanently due to the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, which became law in February 2008. And you only need to register once to be on both North Dakota's list and the national do not call list, as one registration simultaneously adds your number to both.

To file a complaint: If your number has been on the registry for at least 31 days, and a telemarketer calls, you may file a complaint with the FTC. Visit www.donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236). You'll need to provide the date of the call and the phone number or name of the company that called you.



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