

# SRT NEWSletter



A Workshop for Enriching Communities

## SRT HOLDS WORKSHOP FOR RURAL COMMUNITY GROWTH

SRT hosted a first-of-its-kind event in October, *Rural Prosperity: A Workshop for Enriching Communities*. Thirty people attended on behalf of more than a dozen communities across north-central North Dakota to learn about funding opportunities, growth and expansion, and planning for positive change in rural North Dakota. Presenters included Erin Oban from USDA Rural Development, Brian Gion from the Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center, and Megan Langley from Strengthen ND.

Attendees ranged from city mayors to first responders, business owners, development leaders, and community champions. They got to listen, learn, brainstorm, and network with each other to gain an understanding about the strengths and weaknesses in one another's communities.



Speakers referenced real-life examples about putting dreams into practical context through incremental growth, finding the right funding opportunities, and the importance of supporting things like small-town grocery stores or the local diner on Main Street. Discussions were held among presenters and attendees to apply ideas across communities of various sizes, beginning with small actions that could lead to impactful change. The day's events also included information about SRT's four avenues of corporate and cooperative giving.

This event is just one way SRT continues to proudly serve as an economic development catalyst in our service area.



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SRT ANNUAL MEETING

**THURSDAY  
JUNE  
20  
2024**

ND STATE FAIR CENTER  
2005 BURDICK EXPY E. / MINOT, ND

Watch our Facebook page for updates. Looking forward to seeing you June 20th!

## 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 12-member Board of Directors represents our service area throughout the year by attending monthly board meetings, serving on state associations, attending community events, and supporting SRT in the national telecommunications space. Beginning April 22, 2024, 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. Petitions will be available beginning April 22, 2024.
2. Fifteen (15) or more members from the same district from which the nomination is being made must sign the written petition. A married couple constitutes one membership. Either spouse may sign this petition as a member. However, the signature of married spouses 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 April 22, 2024, nor later than May 21, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Petitions postmarked before May 21, 2024, but arriving by mail after May 21, 2024, 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 Meeting. Nominations for director candidates will not be accepted from the floor at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

# SRT SCHOLARSHIP - APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN!



The SRT College Scholarship Program awards four \$1,500 scholarships annually to high school seniors in the SRT service area based on community involvement, extra curricular activities, GPA, and an essay response.

The SRT Technical Scholarship awards \$2,500 to one high school senior or undergraduate student studying telecommunications or other technology-related fields.

Visit [srt.com/srtcares](http://srt.com/srtcares) to apply. All applications are due March 1, 2024. Scholarship winners will be announced in April.

## MINOT FOOD INITIATIVE SELECTED AS FRS GRANT RECIPIENT



FOUNDATION FOR  
RURAL SERVICE

SRT is a proud member of The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), the philanthropic leg of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association that offers grant opportunities ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 to communities served by NTCA Members.

In 2023, SRT submitted seven applications on behalf of area organizations. FRS awarded The Minot Regional Impact Center a \$5,000 grant for their project: A “Food Rescue Hero” app that organizes hot food collection and delivery to those in need.

Prior to applying for funding, organizers of the Center successfully drafted and lobbied for House Bill 1243, which eliminates the liability of restaurants and any person/entity from giving apparently wholesome food away to those who are hungry. The overall goal of the “Food Rescue Hero” project is to feed people and prevent waste.

# RETIREMENTS

SRT WISHES YOU THE BEST OF  
LUCK IN RETIREMENT!



## JODY VANCUREN

After 36 years at SRT, Jody VanCuren retired on June 1, 2023. Jody made a significant contribution to SRT, spending the majority of her career as Senior Carrier Access Specialist in the Regulatory Affairs Department.



## SHEILA DEAVER

Sheila retired in November after 28 years of service. Sheila spent most of her years at SRT in business service. She is looking forward to spending time with her grandchildren and enjoying more time at the lake.



## LISA WEISS

Lisa retired in December after a 29-year-long career at SRT. She started as a temporary employee in 1994 before becoming full-time in the long-distance department. She progressed to long-distance supervisor and analyst roles before becoming Carrier Access Billing Specialist. Lisa’s retirement plans include traveling and playing as much golf as possible.

## BONNIE MATTERN JOINS SRT AS DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Bonnie Mattern, a human resources professional with more than 25 years of administration and leadership experience, joined SRT as Director of People and Culture.



Bonnie oversees all SRT human resources responsibilities including recruitment, onboarding, retention, labor relations, benefits and payroll, and risk management and compliance. She also develops and leads the strategy for an employee-oriented, high-performance culture that emphasizes quality, productivity, job satisfaction, goal attainment, and employee engagement.

“Bonnie’s depth and breadth of experience working for complex organizations affords us the opportunity to build on our current systems and position SRT for the future,” said Cassidy Hjelmstad, SRT CEO and General Manager. “Her addition to our team ensures that SRT has robust human resources capabilities that are vital to our continued success.”

Prior to joining SRT, Bonnie spent three years as Director of Human Resources at Trinity Health, supporting a diverse workforce of 3,000 employees and leading a 20-person team. Bonnie served as Human Resources Director for CHI St. Alexius Health Devils Lake Hospital before she joined Trinity Health. She also served more than 12 years as Director of Human Resources, and five years as Clinic Administrator, at the Heart of America Johnson Clinic.

“After more than 30 years in healthcare, I consider it a privilege to become part of SRT, a telecommunications organization of excellence,” said Bonnie. “I’m a firm believer that people are our greatest asset in the workplace. I am honored to contribute to improved efficiency and satisfaction companywide.”

Originally from Rugby, ND, Bonnie earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the University of Mary, Bismarck. She added, “When I’m not at work, I enjoy spending time with my fiancé and two grandchildren, outdoor activities, and playing pinochle!”

## SRT EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Congratulations to Terry Aannerud, Cameron Schilken, and Allyce Scheresky on their Minot Chamber EDC Eagle Awards. When a customer wanted a new internet line in their home, Terry and Cameron went above and beyond to get multiple devices set up with the new connection: “They were so patient with each other and me when we were trying to get things set up.”



**Terry Aannerud**



**Cameron Schilken**

The customer also said that Terry and Cameron were “exceptional people who took their time so as not to make a mess and yet get the job done in no time” and was pleased by their attitude.

When an SRT customer was having phone issues, Customer Service Representative Allyce was there to help. Not only did she fix the problem; she maintained a cheerful, friendly attitude all along. Allyce’s nominator was especially appreciative of her understanding, making the point to say that Allyce “didn’t make me feel foolish for having the problem.”



**Allyce Scheresky**



Josh Lester, a Communications System Technician at SRT, earned The Father Chris B. Walter Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award at the Minot Area Homeless Coalition, Inc. Annual Awards Luncheon this fall. Josh was recognized for his consistent help and support for the community. Congratulations, Josh, on your well-deserved award!

# SRT CARES



**FUTUREPALOOZA** – More than 700 high school students visited Minot State University's Futurepalooza in September, where Network Operations staff explained possible career paths at SRT.



**HOMECOMING PARADES** – SRT cheered on the home teams at Homecoming parades in our service area including Westhope, TGU Granville, Mohall, Velva, and TGU Tower.



**GIRL SCOUTS BIG EVENT** – The Believe In Girls event provides area Girl Scouts with STEM learning opportunities. SRT sponsored the event and showed girls how to use Ozobots to learn about programming by using visual coding.



**MINOT AREA CAREER EXPO** – SRT splicer technicians demonstrated fiber splicing to area high schoolers at the Career Expo, held at the ND State Fair Center in November.



**VELVA CO-OP MONTH LUNCH** – SRT joined other area cooperatives for lunch and giveaway prizes at the Velva Senior Center in October in honor of Co-op Month.



**NORSK HØSTFEST** – Once again a major event sponsor and the exclusive internet provider, SRT welcomed thousands of festival-goers to our scenic Scandinavian photo booth.



**ND CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE** – SRT hosted customer service staff from cooperatives across the state to meet and learn about best practices and how to better serve customers.

CONNECT WITH US



**NODAKON** – SRT Tech Day at MSU's NoDAKoN taught area high school students about cybersecurity, computer science, and technology. Shawn Grosz, SRT Chief Technology Officer, presented on technology and broadband internet, while Nathan Kitchens, SRT IT Security Engineer, participated in a cybersecurity panel.

# SRT CARES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



**SHOWCASE OF BUSINESS** – As the presenting sponsor, SRT was one of 70 businesses that displayed their best game show gear and visited with more than 1,000 attendees at the Minot Area Chamber EDC's Showcase of Business.



**COMMUNITY HOLIDAY TREE DONATIONS** – SRT donated our own trees to several communities, including Minot, Upham, and Glenburn. Our techs also brought a bucket truck to help with decorations and lights in Minot.



**SAWYER ESPORTS** – SRT Directors presented the Sawyer Public School Drone Racing team with a \$5,000 donation to the school's Drone & eSports program - the first in-house extra curricular activity at the school.



**SRT SUPPORTS CO-OP MONTH** – SRT raised more than \$1,500 for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) with custom-designed "Co-op Roots" t-shirts during Co-op Month. With the purchase of each t-shirt, more than 75 employees and SRT Directors donated to FRS.



**BACKPACK BUDDIES** – SRT employees packed more than 400 bags for Souris Valley United Way's Backpack Buddies program this holiday season. SRT is a proud supporter of SVUW.



## OFFICIAL NOTICES

### 988 SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE: HELP IS ONLY THREE DIGITS AWAY

"988" is the three-digit, nationwide phone number to connect directly to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Simply calling or texting 988 will connect you to compassionate mental health professionals who can provide care and support, or help you support a friend in need.

## AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a federal program designed to assist low-income households in paying for broadband internet service. ACP is under the authority of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is administered by USAC. ACP replaced the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP).

Eligible households can receive up to a \$30 monthly discount on broadband internet service.

The ACP benefit is non-transferable and limited to one monthly internet discount per household. ACP is available for all service offerings (includes broadband internet access service or a bundle of broadband internet service along with voice telephone service). You may obtain ACP-supported broadband internet service from any participating provider of your choosing and may change providers at any time.

In the event the program ends or when a household is no longer eligible, customers will be subject to SRT's regular rates, terms, and conditions.

You can get ACP if you (or someone in your household): (a) already receive a Lifeline Benefit; (b) received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; (c) participate in certain Federal Assistance Programs (National School Lunch Program, WIC, SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (Section 8 Vouchers), Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA)/202/811, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit); or (d) if your household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Apply for ACP with USAC at [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://AffordableConnectivity.gov). After USAC determines you are eligible, call SRT to enroll in the ACP program.

For more information, please call SRT customer service at 701-858-1200 or visit [www.fcc.gov/acp](https://www.fcc.gov/acp) or [www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/](https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/).

## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

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(voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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