



Fall News 2021

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

DakotaLink had an exciting Summer. We hired a new technician in Sioux Falls that started October 4th, 2021. His name is Brett Crosby, and he has been doing his initial training in Rapid City and will come back to train in Sioux Falls and with our technician from Brookings. We are very excited to have him on board.

Mark Cook from our Aberdeen office has moved a few doors down. The new office is bigger and since moving was not DakotaLink's desire, DakotaLink got a larger space at a very reasonable price.

Brett Burden helped create a pair of roll-up banners that we will use at conferences. They are roughly 84" tall and 31" wide and are mounted on stands that sit on the floor. One is a general DakotaLink information banner and the other pertains to the AT Grant and Fee for Services.

We also completed our fiscal year 21-22 budget and completed the DakotaLink contract for the new year.

KeloLand Commercial

DakotaLink created a commercial this summer that aired on KeloLand Living on September 7th and will air again on November 22nd. Here is a link to the commercial if you missed it:

<https://www.keloland.com/keloland-living/dakotalink-providing-technology-solutions-for-lifes-limitations/>

A little more than 24 hours after the segment aired, a lady had complications from surgery and was having trouble with one arm. She watched our segment and called and received some information about some tools she can use during her recovery from DakotaLink. She was very pleased to have someone to talk to about her needs.

Focus on Low Vision Devices

Below is some information on two CCTV's that are gaining popularity summarized by our Low Vision Specialist Josh Popelka.

The Merlin Mini is a folding CCTV with a 3-position camera: self-view, distance view and desktop view. The magnified image can be view in color, black & white, and other color schemes to enhance contrast based on user comfort. It folds down and fits into an easily portable case for travel or storage.

<https://www.enhancedvision.com/low-vision-product-line/merlin-mini.html>

The Pebble HD is a handheld CCTV that can be carried in a case in a handbag or clipped to your belt. A handle folds out from under the unit so it can be handheld similar to a magnifying glass or set on a table to tilt the Pebble at a 45-degree angle for reading. Like the Merlin Mini, the Pebble can display magnified images in color, black & white, and multiple other colors to help the user see comfortably.

<https://www.enhancedvision.com/low-vision-product-line/pebble-hd-hand-held-portable-electronic-magnifier.html>

With our budget year ending at the end of September, we had some funds to expend and were able to get these two items as well as some other CCTV's and some sound equipment for our lending library.

Washington Update

I have attached a bill summary of S.2401, The 21st Century Assistive Technology Act that reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. This bill was passed out of the Senate Health, Education, Pensions and Labor (HELP) Committee. It awaits consideration by the entire United States Senate. While there are many steps still to come in the process of reauthorization, this is an exciting milestone.

MERR Program Now in Its 6th Year!

The Medical Equipment and Recycling Program was funded again for FY 21-22. We are lucky to have this program in the State of South Dakota. There are only 3 active Medicaid recycling programs in the Country that are operated by State AT Programs. Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. Many states are looking to replicate what we have created here.

DakotaLink has partnered with the Department of Social Services to form the Medical Equipment Reuse and Recycle (MERR) program. This program serves as a resource for individuals to donate equipment that has served its purpose or is no longer needed.

How does MERR work?

- Individuals identify items no longer in use.
- Individuals donate items to MERR.
- MERR cleans and restores devices to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Equipment is listed in the MERR inventory online.
- Equipment is redistributed to individuals in need. Priority is given to South Dakota Medicaid recipients, but anyone may be eligible to receive DME.
- A fee for refurbishment costs is charged to non-Medicaid recipients to support program costs.

If you or anyone you know needs gently used Medical Equipment, we would encourage you to support this program.

Ron Lien continues to work to expand The Medical Equipment Recycle and Reuse program. We have added ROHO cushions to the inventory and have had some new requests out of Rapid City that we fulfilled.

Here is a link to the brochure for the program:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MERR-Brochure-20181004-1.pdf>

Free Assistive Technology Webinars

This link will provide you with several Assistive Technology Webinars assembled by the Accessible Technology Coalition:

<https://at3centerblog.com/2021/10/01/free-at-webinars-october-2021/>

Social Networking

We continue our efforts in social networking getting a great deal of traffic on Facebook and share posts with ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, DSS, and MERR. More resource information on our website: <https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/AT-Resource-Directory-2017.pdf>

Low Interest Loans

We also want to remind everyone of our low-interest loan program. The loans are designed to fit your budget and we will work with you to create affordable payback payments. We will also help you fill out the application if you have any concerns with that process. The application is on our website, but here is the direct link:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/at-funding>

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism by earning a RESNA ATP certification. (ATP – Assistive Technology Professional). We currently have 5 staff with their ATP certification and will continue to help the newer employees gain that status. To maintain these credentials, we must complete a specific amount of CEU's (Continuing Education Credits) on a biennial basis. We have been doing that mostly through webinars that ATAP provides through an agreement with ATIA.



Remember, we are on Facebook! So, be sure to “like” us to see what we are up to daily:

<https://www.facebook.com/DakotaLinkAT/>

Be safe and healthy!

Best,

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DakotaLink is the South Dakota Assistive Technology Program.

Our mission is to assist individuals with functional limitations; due to a disability, illness, injury, or the effects of aging; maximize their potential whether at home or in the community, at school, at work, or at play through the use of Assistive Technology.

An assistive technology device is any equipment or tool that helps individuals overcome limitations in daily activities.

Assistive technology services assist individuals to acquire, use, modify or maintain an assistive technology device.