



Spring News 2023

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

Happy Spring! I hope you all are enjoying winter/summer days we have been getting. That's South Dakota for ya!

On March 1st, we celebrated National Assistive Technology Awareness Day.
#ATAwareness

The National Assistive Technology (AT) Awareness Day commemorates the importance and vital role AT plays in the lives of people with disabilities and older adults. This day reinforces the necessary support and funding the federal government provides to ensure people receive the assistive technology necessary to engage in education, employment, and community living. Assistive technology allows individuals with disabilities and older adults to be included in their communities and in inclusive classrooms and workplaces and these devices are necessities, not luxury items.

National Assistive Technology Awareness Day also provides an opportunity to commend assistive technology specialists and program coordinators for their hard work and dedication to serving individuals with disabilities who are in need of finding the proper assistive technology to meet their individual needs, and professional organizations and researchers dedicated to facilitating the access and acquisition of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities and older adults in need of assistive technology devices.

This is also the time that we make our Congressional Hill visits to meet and inform Congress and staff about what DakotaLink does for South Dakota and this time we can

thank our congressional leaders for reauthorizing S. 2401 The 21st Century Assistive Technology Act. We are still meeting remotely so we did a virtual fly-in through Zoom to meet and discuss our program and thank them for the reauthorization. It has been since 2004 since the last reauthorization.

Conferences

This Spring we were finally able to send our staff to assistive technology conferences and trainings. It's been nearly 10 years since we've been able to fit that into our budget. Some of the conferences and trainings just are not as up to par as meeting in person and getting hands on experience. Josh Popelka and James Honomichl attended the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference in Northridge California. (<https://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/sessions>) Brett Crosby and Jared Brown attended SureHands training in Pine Island, New York. (<https://www.surehands.com>) We also attended the Special Education Conference in Deadwood. James hosted a booth at the Special Olympics conference. Page Hudson attended the Virtual Leadership Symposium as mentioned above.

DakotaLink Advisory Council

Unfortunately, DakotaLink and the state of South Dakota suffered a great loss of Steve Stewart who passed February 23, 2023. He was the council's Chair and a huge asset to us and the people of South Dakota. He will be greatly missed.

In our next Advisory Council Meeting, we will have to nominate and elect a new Chair to replace Steve. The executive team assists with creating the agenda for future DakotaLink Advisory Council meetings. Please think about who you might nominate or if you would like to Chair or be on the Executive Committee. You can reach out directly to me if you or someone you know is interested.

We are also looking for individuals with a disability to join our Advisory Council. If you or anyone you know would like to be a part of the DakotaLink Advisory Council, I have provided a link to the application:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DakotaLink-Advisory-Council-Application.pdf>

KeloLand Commercial

DakotaLink is keeping our commercial going through the summer. It will also air on KeloLand Xtra. Here is a link to the commercial if you missed it:

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

State Plan

We had a minor update on DakotaLink's State Plan for 2021-23. This was done through a module created by CATADA.

As part of an expanded CATADA work scope, a new State Plan component in NATADS (National Assistive Technology Act Data System) is under development for submission of the 2021-23 State Plan. The target date for the online State Plan component to open for data entry is April 1 with a due date of July 1 which provides a full three months to submit. The update has been submitted and accepted by the federal government.

Free Assistive Technology Webinars

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

<https://www.atia.org/path-lms/?pathPage=%2Fatia%2Fcourses>

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.