



## *Summer News 2022*

### *Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations*

#### **Greetings!**

Happy Summer! I hope everyone enjoyed their 4<sup>th</sup> of July! I also hope everyone survived the 2 Derechos we encountered in the last couple of months. They really did a number on the east side of the state. Hopefully, we can just have some “normal” storms as we continue through the summer.

A Derecho is a widespread, long-lived, straight-line windstorm that is associated with a fast-moving group of severe thunderstorms known as a mesoscale convective system. Derechos can cause hurricane-force winds, tornadoes, heavy rains, and flash floods.

#### **Federal Funding**

The Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) facilitates the coordination of state AT Programs nationally and provides technical assistance and support to its members as well as strives to protect and increase funding for the AT Act.

ATAP was level-funded for the 56 State and Territory Programs for AT at \$31 million from 2004 to 2015.

In the FY2016 Federal Budget, the AT Act received the first increase of \$1 million.

Over FY2016 to FY2022, the AT Act received increases to bring the total line item to \$36.5 million – A total of \$5.5 million in increases.

These consistent increases are directly related to the advocacy work facilitated by ATAP and provided by the AT Act programs.

The House FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill funded the Assistive Technology Act at \$44 million. It now sits in the Senate for final approval.

This is a great start as the House and Senate begin finalizing the FY2023 budget this summer.

### **Leadership**

Brett Burden and Page Hudson continue our leadership training with Prevailing Leadership. Our next in-person session is in August at the TIE office in Rapid City. It's truly a great experience and gets us working with BHSSC staff that we normally would just email or talk to on the telephone.

### **DakotaLink Advisory Council**

We have determined that 1-year terms for officers is a little too short to get comfortable in those positions. During the last council meeting, we voted to extend the officer terms to 2 years. This will help to grow the council better as the experience will be 8 meetings instead of just 4. The by-laws will need to be updated and will be presented to the council at our next meeting in September to vote for that minor change in the document.

We also voted for new officers. They are as follows:

Steve Stewart – Chair

Richard Moeller – Vice Chair

Eric Weiss – Member at Large

We also approved 2 new members. They are:

Lyle Cook, Director of Oun'iyekiyapi Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Kendra Gottsleben, Marketing Communications Specialist Center for Disabilities

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>

### **AT3 Blog – Free Webinars**

AT3 Center News & Tips is the blog for the State and Territory Assistive Technology Act Programs and their community partners. Every U.S. state and territory has an Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program (thanks to the federal Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended). AT Act programs provide access to the technology, devices, software and AT services that can improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities of all ages. Learn more at AT3Center.net.

Here is a link to the free webinars:

<https://at3centerblog.com/2022/06/29/free-at-webinars-july-2022/>

### **KeloLand Commercial**

DakotaLink is keeping our commercial going through September of 2022. 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**

The State Plan is comprised of aggregate data based on the requirements of the laws of the Assistive Technology Act and is considered grantee compliance.

DakotaLink's State Plan for 2021-23 has been approved at the State and Federal level. 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.

### **MERR Program Year 6**

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.

Press releases for MERR will be distributed to the full Department of Social Services media list in periodic increments starting July 2022. Specific information regarding MERR will be communicated to Medicaid providers via regular Provider Bulletins by Medical Services staff.

Here is a link to the brochure for the program:

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

Here is a list of the latest items available from the website:

<https://www.sd.at4all.com/Items/ItemSearch.aspx?Mode=NewItem>

### **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.