Phone Number Changes

Beginning on March 28, 2009, a new area code will be added in West Virginia. The new 681 area code will be used for new customers. Those who currently have the 304 area code will not change. Residents will have to begin using all ten digits (area code plus the seven digit phone number) to make all calls, including local calls.

An initial ‘permissive’ 10-digit dialing period will begin July 26, 2008 and end February 27, 2009. During the permissive dialing period, calls can be dialed with either 7 or 10 digits. The mandatory 10-digit dialing begins February 28, 2009. Users who do not dial all 10 digits will get a recording saying that the call cannot be completed. More information about the transition can be found at www.cad.state.wv.us.

GOOD NEWS FOR VP USERS

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has taken steps toward making sure that beginning December 31, 2008, the deaf and hard of hearing community will be using the 10-digit phone number. Most videophone (VP) users now use an IP address in order to make a call. The 10-digit issue has become a civil rights victory by requiring relay providers to grant videophone users a number that is easier to remember. The deaf and hard of hearing community will now have a real phone number. Just like voice telephone users, friends, family and others will recognize the series of numbers as a phone number, not as a fake number.

This change has been a long time coming. In the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Congress required the FCC to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing individuals be able to “engage in [telephone] communication...in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of” a person without hearing loss to communicate by telephone. This change is a major step in fulfilling that mandate. GoAmerica and AT&T were instrumental in making the change. Advocacy groups including the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) were also involved in this historic ruling.
Sign Language Classes

The schedule for Sign Language classes at the Division of Rehabilitation Services in Institute, West Virginia is now available. These classes are free and open to everyone age 16 and older. To register or for more information, contact Connie Pitman or Donna Whittington at (304) 766-4884.

Beginning I, Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., September 11-November 13.
Intermediate, Mondays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., September 8-November 17.
Advanced, Mondays and Thursdays, 1-2 p.m., September 8-November 17.
Intro. to Interpreting, Tuesdays, 4-6 p.m., September 9-November 25.

Deaf Club Events Around the State

August 1, Deaf Chat Coffee, 5-10 p.m., Tim Horton's, 3903 Teays Valley Rd., Hurricane. For more information, contact Diana Ramsey at iamaslsigner@verizon.net.

August 2, Romney Association of the Deaf, 10 a.m. to dusk, Wapocoma Family Campground, Romney. Admission $10. Prizes, Bingo. For more information, visit www.geocities.com/rad_club_26757/WELCOME_RAD.

August 16, Fairmont Association of the Deaf, 4-10 p.m., Winfield Community Center, Fairmont. Admission: $2 per adult, children free. Bring your own supper and snacks. For more information, contact Michael Losh at FMTDEAF@yahoo.com or (304) 278-5723 (tty).

August 16, Wheeling Deaf Association, Picnic, Noon-?, swimming, games, putt putt golf, food, prizes. Admission $10 (12-18: $5, 6-11: $3). Wheeling Park, 1801 National Rd., Wheeling. For more information send an email to Wheelingdeafclub@yahoo.com.

August 30, Charleston Association of the Deaf, 60th Anniversary Picnic, 11 a.m. to dark, Valley Park in Hurricane. For more information, contact Jimmy Harrison at (304) 757-7863 (vp).

September 5, Deaf Chat Coffee, 5-10 p.m., Tim Horton's, 3903 Teays Valley Rd., Hurricane. For more information, contact Diana Ramsey at iamaslsigner@verizon.net.

September 6, Fairmont Association of the Deaf, 4-10 p.m., Winfield Community Center, Fairmont. Admission: $2 per adult, children free. Bring your own supper and snacks. For more information, contact Michael Losh at FMTDEAF@yahoo.com or (304) 278-5723 (tty).

September 6, Romney Association of the Deaf, doors open at 5 p.m., VFW Legion in Romney. Admission $10. Dinner and games. For more information, visit www.geocities.com/rad_club_26757/WELCOME_RAD.

September 12-13, West Virginia River Anglers Association for the Deaf, Bluestone Lake. For more information, contact Tony Keathley at ctk_bigbass@hotmail.com.
Family Support Group Meetings

Family members of deaf or hard of hearing individuals are invited to the Parent/Family Support and Education Group the fourth Wednesday of every month at the Division of Rehabilitation Services in Institute. This group began meeting in May. It’s a time for families to discuss issues with other families who may have similar questions, experiences and concerns. Upcoming speakers and topics include the Ski*Hi program, Birth-to-Three, SSI and SSDI benefits, services that the Rehabilitation Center offers.

The next meeting will be August 27, 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact Donna Whittington or Connie Pitman at (304) 766-4809 or (304) 766-4884.

Sorenson VRS Hiring Interpreters

Sorenson Video Relay Service (VRS) is currently hiring professional interpreters to work at the Charleston (WV) Sorenson VRS Interpreting Center. Interpreters will work at the state-of-the-art center and will direct and manage video relay calls for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Positions are available for full-time and part-time video interpreters. For more information, visit www.sorensonvrs.com or email Stephanie Criner at scriner@sorenson.com.

Hotel Accessibility Laws

Did you know...

The number of TTYs (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) that a hotel is required to have available depends on the number of rooms in the hotel (or cruise ship).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Total Rooms in Hotel</th>
<th># of Rooms that must be Accessible</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-25</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-50</td>
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<td>51-75</td>
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<td>76-100</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>101-150</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-1000</td>
<td>2% of total # of rooms</td>
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Failure to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act may result in fines up to $50,000 for the first violation and $100,000 for each subsequent violation. Additional information can be found at www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm.
WVCDHH will be at the West Virginia State Fair on Saturday, August 16. Plan to stop by and see us in the West Virginia Building!