



Make your connection...

Vermont Relay

VERMONT TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE

Summer 2010

New VTRS Account Manager Michelle Sangster



Michelle Sangster

Vermont Telecommunications Relay Service (VTRS) has a new account manager, Michelle Sangster. Born and raised in St. Louis, Sangster received her B.S. in marketing with a minor in psychology from Rochester Institute of Technology/National Technical Institute

for the Deaf in Rochester, N.Y. She started working with Sprint Relay in 2003 as a marketing intern in Denver. Upon graduation from college, she went back to Denver to work as a contemporary marketing team representative at Anheuser-Busch, Inc., while also working as a subcontractor for Sprint Relay. She then came to Sprint Relay full-time in February 2009. Today, Michelle is the Account Manager for Connecticut and Vermont, and the CapTel® Marketing Manager for Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Vermont, and Connecticut.

As a CapTel and relay user, Sangster has hands-on experience with the products and services that VTRS provides, allowing her to better serve the community. Having lost most of her hearing at a late age, she is empathetic to the community's needs. Relay and CapTel services are the lifelines that link deaf and hard of hearing people to friends, family and peers. Sangster's enthusiasm and passion, paired with a can-do attitude and a desire to help others, is what makes her valuable to consumers.

If you have questions, concerns or commendations, Sangster can be reached at Michelle.Sangster@Sprint.com or (860) 243-0351 Voice/CapTel.

Introducing Sunni Eriksen

Sunni Eriksen is now the designated contact person for VTRS and the Vermont Equipment Distribution Program. She works as a Consumer Affairs and Public Information Specialist at the Vermont Department of Public Service.

CapTel 800 to Replace CapTel 200

The new CapTel 800 has replaced the CapTel 200. It works like any traditional telephone, but shows captions during telephone conversations. The 800 has many notable features, including:

- Captions are provided by a free service that automatically connects to the call.
- Incoming callers can dial the service first, then enter your phone number for you to get captions.
- Adjustable font sizes and colors.
- Phone book to store frequently called numbers.

- Easy access to voice mail and answering machine messages.
- Works just like a standard phone for people who do not need captions.

For more information on these features and many other CapTel benefits, visit www.captel.com or contact VTRS at any of the numbers listed on page 4.



www.vermontrelay.com

VTRS at Business and Industry Expo May 26-27



Michelle Sangster stands by the VTRS display at the Business and Industry Expo in Burlington last May.

VTRS Account Manager Michelle Sangster and Vermont Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program's Jorika Stockwell attended the Vermont Business and Industry Expo in Burlington on May 26 and 27. The expo was hosted by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce and housed over 200 exhibitors on two floors. Exhibitions ranged from television stations to health care services to financial services.

Numerous exhibitors stopped by the Vermont Relay booth, curious about the services available to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Many of them knew someone who could benefit from those services. Sangster and Stockwell found the event to be a great opportunity to speak with individuals who were unaware of VTRS services and to share brochures and other materials outlining VTRS programs and services.

We're Looking for Your Feedback!

The Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) would like to hear from you. We'd like to know how well VTRS is working for deaf, hard of hearing and speech-disabled Vermonters, as well as the hearing community.

We'd like to hear about your experiences using VTRS, what you like, what you don't like, and how the service could be improved. If you have called someone using the relay service and were hung up on, we'd like to know about it. If you're having problems with your CapTel phone or service, please let us know. If you have positive things to say about VTRS, we'd like to know about that, too.

To give us your feedback, please contact the DPS Consumer Affairs & Public Information Division at:

(800) 734-8390 TTY
 (800) 622-4496 Voice
consumer@state.vt.us

Speech-to-Speech (STS) for Speech-Disabled Users

The Speech-to-Speech (STS) service allows speech-disabled persons to voice their conversations. A specially trained Sprint Relay operator repeats the words of the person with a speech disability or synthesizer output to the other caller. You do not need special equipment to use this service.

STS works in the following way:

1. STS caller talks to the other party.
2. The relay operator re-voices STS caller's portion of the conversation to the other party.
3. The other party replies directly to the STS caller.

The STS service is provided at no charge to either caller, and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the length or number of calls placed. Vermont Relay's equipment and exceptional operator training ensure that people with speech disabilities are heard and understood. As an added benefit, VT Relay can permanently establish your call type as speech-to-speech.

To access this service anywhere in the United States, call (877) 787-2660 toll-free. For more information, visit www.vermontrelay.com or call (877) 253-0446.

Vermont Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Provides Devices



Are you tired of asking people to repeat themselves on the phone? Are you tired of relying on other people to make calls for you? The CapTel phone may be just what you need. The CapTel phone is an amplified phone with captions for you to read while listening to the other party. Spoken words are displayed onscreen verbatim to allow the conversation to flow as naturally as if it were between two hearing callers.

Contact the Vermont Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (VTEDP) to see if you qualify for a free CapTel phone or other devices. VTEDP has the mission of providing free adaptive

telephone equipment to income-qualified Vermonters with disabilities. This service is funded by the state of Vermont, and none of VTEDP's equipment requires monthly service fees or initial set-up fees.

Other devices the VTEDP provides include TTYs, Braille TTYs, amplified telephones, flashers/loud ringer devices, various amplified phones, voice carry-over or hearing carry-over telephones, and text telephone software.

For More Information
 (888) 254-3323 ext. 549
 or (802) 258-9549 TTY/Voice
 (866) 327-2640 Videophone
tedp@vcdhh.org
www.vtedp.org

CapTel 200 & 800:

Remember to Register Your Long-Distance Provider

If you make long-distance calls with your CapTel 200 or 800 phone, be sure to register your long distance provider with CapTel Customer Service. This ensures that any long distance charges on captioned calls are billed under your existing service or calling plan. If you don't register your provider, long distance charges you incur during captioned calls will be billed under your state relay service's long distance provider – which is typically more expensive than your individual calling plan.

Registering is easy. To register:

Phone: (888) 269-7477

Online: www.CapTel.com

E-mail: CapTel@CapTel.com

Fax: (608) 204-6167

Encourage people who call you long distance through CapTel to register their long distance providers as well, so that their calls are billed under their existing plans.



– Reprinted from CapTel's Spring 2009 newsletter

Contacting VTRS

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Account Manager

www.vermontrelay.com
(860) 243-0351 Voice
(860) 242-7989 Fax

Vermont Relay

711 or (800) 253-0191 TTY
(800) 253-0195 Voice
(877) 253-8260 VCO
(877) 243-2823 CapTel
(800) 253-0191 HCO
(877) 253-0446 STS
(877) 253-7244 French
(877) 253-5424 Spanish

Don't Hang Up

VTRS is designed to connect hearing disabled people with people and businesses using regular voice telephones. Although the relay service has been in existence for more than 10 years, many people don't understand how it works. As a result, people who receive relay calls often immediately hang up, believing the caller is a telemarketer. This is why the Don't Hang Up campaign was developed.

The goal of the Don't Hang Up campaign is to decrease the frequency of hang-ups by people who are unfamiliar with relay. The campaign includes a public service announcement and articles in business publications. Yet the best way to reduce hang-ups, especially when calling businesses, is to educate businesses about hanging up on relay calls.

You can help in two ways. First, when you experience a hang-up on a relay call, let us know by filling out the form at www.vermontrelay.com/donthangup1.php. We will then contact the business to educate it about relay calls.

Second, consider changing the way you have your relay calls announced. Instead of having the communication assistant (CA) say, "This is the Vermont Relay Service," ask the CA to say, "This is a customer of your business calling through Vermont Relay," or "This is [your name] calling through Vermont Relay." Some people have found that this kind of greeting reduces hang-ups.

For more information, visit www.vermontrelay.com/donthangup1.php.



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