

# The RELAY Connection

News, information, updates and more from Maryland Relay.

## Maryland Relay Contract Awarded to AT&T



Following an intensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the Maryland Department of Budget & Management (DBM) has selected AT&T as its new Relay service provider. The Maryland Board of Public Works approved the new contract with AT&T at its regular meeting in March 2002.

"The State of Maryland looks

forward to working with AT&T to continue Maryland Relay's outstanding record of innovative service and

"We are thrilled to bring AT&T's relay services to Maryland, where users have a reputation for requiring the highest quality services available."

— D. Sue Decker, General Manager of AT&T's Accessible Communications Services

maintain their position as a national leader in the relay service industry," says DBM Secretary T. Eloise Foster.

D. Sue Decker, General Manager of AT&T's Accessible Communications Services is equally excited about the new contract. "We are thrilled to bring AT&T's relay services to Maryland, where users have a reputation for requiring the highest quality services available."

The contract will go into effect on June 1, 2002, and Relay services will be provided from a new center located in southwest Baltimore City.

## New Contract with AT&T to Bring More Relay Features, Faster Service

Beginning June 1, 2002, AT&T will be Maryland Relay's new telecommunications provider. The change will bring new and improved Relay services for citizens across the State. Some of the key improvements will include:

- **Internet Protocol (IP)** – Maryland Relay will be the first state relay service in the nation to offer Internet Relay service to their users. Each Relay user will be able to register for a login name and password to access IP Relay.

- **Caller ID** – Starting in June, those who have Caller ID capabilities will see the phone number 1-800-855-0000 on their Caller ID display when they receive a Maryland Relay call. By October 1, 2002, the Caller ID device will display the number of the person calling.

- **Conference Calling with High-Speed Captioning** – Conference calls consisting of four or more people will be transmitted to your high-speed TTY or computer at speeds approaching 200 words per minute. Maryland Relay will require a two-day advance notice for users who wish to take advantage of this feature.

- **Faster, More Accurate Outgoing Calls** – Improved technology will allow individuals to use their TTY to dial the number they wish to call. The call will be automatically connected by the Relay system, and the Relay Operator will be on the line and ready to handle the call when the other party answers.

- **Household Customer Profiles** – Relay users will be able to have more than one customer profile per household.

Different household members will be able to access their individual customer profile options by using a personal identification number (PIN).

Both Maryland Relay and AT&T are excited to offer these new technological advances to all users. As we switch over to AT&T, we want to hear from you. Your feedback helps us ensure the best quality Relay service for all Maryland residents. Please contact Maryland Relay customer service at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), to offer your opinions and suggestions.



## Maryland Relay to Offer New Services by Summertime *By Willis Mann*

Over the last decade, relay services across the nation have made remarkable strides in developing innovative technology products and strategies to meet a wide range of communication needs. Many of us still shake our heads when we think back to the days when we had to depend on the generosity of friends, neighbors, family members and even strangers to make phone calls for us.

Currently, Maryland Relay offers several different ways to make a Relay call, including Voice Carry-Over (VCO), Hearing Carry-Over (HCO), 2-Line VCO, Spanish-to-English and Spanish-to-Spanish capabilities. This summer, Maryland Relay will debut exciting advances in Relay calling. One new method, called Internet Protocol (IP), will allow Relay users to use the Internet to make Maryland Relay calls. Another new feature will permit Relay users to have more than one customer profile per household. In response to your many requests, Maryland Relay also will offer Caller ID services.

Maryland Relay is thrilled to be working with AT&T, their new Relay service provider, to implement the above changes and more. For more news and updates about advances in Relay calling, visit Maryland Relay's Web site at, [www.mdrelay.org](http://www.mdrelay.org).

## Maryland Relay and Ultratec® Team Up to Offer CapTel Trial

Maryland Relay and Ultratec® will be conducting a CapTel phone trial through November 2002. The CapTel phone is beneficial to people who cannot hear clearly over the telephone. It is also useful to current VCO (Voice Carry-Over) and 2-line VCO users.

Resembling a regular phone with a large visual display, the CapTel phone—designed by Ultratec®—allows users to read a captioned version of their phone conversations. CapTel technology also gives users the freedom to interrupt or speak over the other person's words, creating a more natural conversational flow.

Only a limited number of participants can join in this trial. If you are interested in participating, please contact the TAM office at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), or e-mail [moreinfo@mdrelay.org](mailto:moreinfo@mdrelay.org).

### The RELAY Connection

*The Relay Connection* is a biannual publication of the Department of Budget and Management, Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM) program. The following people contributed to this publication:

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## After Five Years, MAT Program Still Going Strong

Approximately five years ago, the General Assembly of Maryland authorized the creation of the Maryland Access Telecommunications (MAT) equipment distribution program, authorizing Maryland Relay to distribute **FREE** telecommunications equipment to individuals certified as having hearing, vision, mobility, speech or cognitive disabilities. Since its inception, the MAT program has distributed over 2,275 pieces of assistive telephone technology to over 1,000 individuals.

The MAT assessment sites and Maryland Relay staff members have provided assistance and educational materials relating to the MAT program while conducting assessments of qualified individuals who have submitted program applications. These assessments—provided **free of charge** at any of our four Regional Centers—give customers access to the telecommunications equipment they need. After customers receive their equipment, staff members at our Regional Centers offer assistance and training sessions upon request. Staff members also make informative presentations to individuals who are unfamiliar with the MAT program. For more information or to arrange for a free presentation or equipment training session, please contact Brenda Kelly-Frey at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY) or e-mail [brenda@mdrelay.org](mailto:brenda@mdrelay.org).

In addition, State, local and county government agencies may purchase assistive telephone technology for their employees through our procurement contracts with technology vendors. For more information, please contact Brenda at the above phone number or e-mail address.

## Maryland Relay Brochures now Available in Spanish!

Spanish speakers who use Maryland Relay will be thrilled to learn that all Maryland Relay brochures are now available in Spanish. For copies of the translated brochures, contact the TAM office at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY).

## **GABTR Meeting Features Exciting Multivendorsing Debate** *By Willis Mann*

On November 10, 2001, members of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) gathered for a quarterly meeting in Baltimore. Much of the meeting was spent debating multivendorsing, a concept allowing more than one vendor to provide relay services in a state so that users may choose their own preferred provider. Multivendorsing is still a relatively untested and unexplored approach to providing relay services.

At the meeting, attorney Robert Mather, representing the Maryland Association of the Deaf, argued that multivendorsing benefits users by allowing them to choose their provider of choice. Robert went on to explain how multivendorsing will increase competition among providers, which, in turn, will increase the quality of relay services. Robert concluded his argument by recommending that TAM extend the present contract to allow time to implement the multivendorsing approach.

Mitch Travers, GABTR chair, disagreed with Robert. Mitch drew attention to the lack of evidence demonstrating that multivendorsing can improve the quality of relay services. Mitch also mentioned that California—currently the only state using the multivendorsing approach—has experienced problems with the concept. Mitch explained that while multivendorsing presents an attractive option, further research and investigation is necessary.

After both sides voiced their opinions, GABTR voted to recommend that if the current contract is not extended, the length of the new contract should be three years with two, standard one-year renewable options. Additionally, GABTR voted to establish a task force to work with TAM (and other interested parties) to investigate how multivendorsing could be implemented successfully in Maryland.

## **Next GABTR Meeting to Take Place in Western Maryland**

The Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) will hold its first meeting of the year on Saturday, June 1, 2002, at 9 a.m., at the Wisp Mountain Hotel & Conference Center. The conference center is located on the shores of Deep Creek Lake in McHenry, Maryland.

All GABTR meetings are open to the public (interpreters, real-time captioning and assistive listening systems are provided). Time is set aside during each meeting for attendees to voice their questions, concerns and suggestions. For more information, contact Willis Mann at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), or e-mail [willis@mdrelay.org](mailto:willis@mdrelay.org).

## **The Operator's Corner**



Each day, thousands of Maryland Relay users depend on our Relay Operators to type their conversations or voice text. Listed below are a few suggestions from the Relay Operators to help make your Relay calls proceed smoothly:

- Please provide the Relay Operator with as much information as you can up front. For example, tell them the name or extension of the person you are calling, any unusual name spellings if needed or the appropriate number prompts to enter (e.g., "Please dial 410-123-4586 and then press 2") at the beginning of the call.
- Let the operator know in advance if you are placing a call to a Voice Carry-Over (VCO) or Hearing Carry-Over (HCO) user.
- Speak at a moderate pace so that the Relay Operator can type your conversation accurately.
- If you cannot reach 7-1-1 from your local phone company, call Maryland Relay Customer service at 1-800-552-7724.

## **GABTR Representatives**

You can contact representatives of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) at the numbers and e-mail addresses below. They are on this Board to serve the needs of their community and welcome your input.

**Mitchell D. Travers, Chair**  
301-441-2715 (TTY)  
[mitch.travers@mdrelay.org](mailto:mitch.travers@mdrelay.org)  
*Deaf Representative*

**Isaac O. Agboola**  
202-651-5040 (TTY)  
[isaac.agboola@mdrelay.org](mailto:isaac.agboola@mdrelay.org)  
*Deaf Representative*

**Brenda Battat**  
301-657-2248 (V)  
301-657-2249 (TTY)  
[brenda.battat@mdrelay.org](mailto:brenda.battat@mdrelay.org)  
*Senior Citizen Representative*

**Susan Boswell**  
301-317-8912 (V/TTY)  
[susan.boswell@mdrelay.org](mailto:susan.boswell@mdrelay.org)  
*Hard of Hearing Representative*

**Patricia Bowman**  
410-333-6304 (TTY)  
[patsy.bowman@mdrelay.org](mailto:patsy.bowman@mdrelay.org)  
*Government Representative*

**Marie Campbell**  
301-604-1568  
[marie.campbell@mdrelay.org](mailto:marie.campbell@mdrelay.org)  
*Deaf Representative*

**Rebecca Ladew**  
410-467-0967 (TTY)  
[rebecca.ladew@mdrelay.org](mailto:rebecca.ladew@mdrelay.org)  
*Speech Disabled Representative*

**Joy Larson**  
301-588-6545 (TTY)  
[joy.larson@mdrelay.org](mailto:joy.larson@mdrelay.org)  
*DeafBlind Representative*

**Gary Manifold**  
410-569-4340 (V-via Relay)  
[lgmlgm@prodigy.net](mailto:lgmlgm@prodigy.net)  
*Mobility Disabled Representative*

**Susan Miller**  
410-767-8036 (V)  
[susan.miller@mdrelay.org](mailto:susan.miller@mdrelay.org)  
*Government Representative*

**Annette Reichman**  
202-205-8352 (V)  
202-205-9152 (TTY)  
[annette.reichman@mdrelay.org](mailto:annette.reichman@mdrelay.org)  
*Deaf Representative*

**James A. Stevenson**  
301-759-2047 (V)  
[jim.stevenson@mdrelay.org](mailto:jim.stevenson@mdrelay.org)  
*Government Representative*

## Maryland Relay Plays Large Role in Howard County Disability Awareness Program

By Randy Murbach

Currently in its twentieth year of operation, the Howard County Disability Awareness Program (DAP) strives to eliminate stereotypes and attitudinal barriers among students through creative, fun-filled school presentations. The presentations show students how individuals with disabilities can still lead active, full lives.

DAP Manager Ann Wade coordinates presentations at elementary and middle schools throughout Howard County. Ann reports students at these schools enjoy learning about Maryland Relay, deaf culture and making relay calls to TTY users.

Over the years, the program continues to incorporate Maryland Relay in its student presentations. In fact, Maryland Relay staff members Randy Murbach and Willis Mann have both served as DAP presenters. The program also provides an additional avenue to spread the word about the new *Maryland Relay Kids Keeping In Touch* educational kit.

Maryland Relay is pleased to play an important role in DAP's mission and hopes other counties in the State will consider adopting similar programs to help increase hearing loss awareness and sensitivity among Maryland students.

## Maryland Relay Sets 2002 Marketing Goals

This year's marketing plan features an extensive public relations campaign using a variety of innovative public relations strategies to complement each of our marketing plan objectives. More specifically, Maryland Relay will focus on clarifying the use of 7-1-1 dialing—the new, convenient way to access Maryland Relay.

Marketing efforts this year will continue to target senior citizens, their adult children and caregivers. New print advertising concepts, direct mail pieces and cable advertising will be used to show seniors who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or speech disabled how Maryland Relay provides an easy way to keep in touch with friends, family members and businesses.

In addition to seniors, Maryland Relay will strive to reach members of the Hispanic population. Our informational brochures have been translated into Spanish to spread the word about our Spanish-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English services. Print advertising and public relations efforts will enhance our efforts to reach this population.

A Maryland Relay awareness study was conducted recently and indicated that many State residents believe 7-1-1 is a phone number to be used for emergencies. To address this issue, a 2002 print advertising and public relations campaign will emphasize the proper use of 7-1-1.

As we move forward with our 2002 marketing goals, Maryland Relay will use public relations strategies and direct mail pieces to promote our Speech-to-Speech services to current and potential referral sources. We also will work to increase awareness of the MAT program. Be on the lookout for more marketing, advertising and public relations updates in future issues of *The Relay Connection*.

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## In Case of Emergency, Dial 9-1-1!

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## Maryland Relay and MAPLA Form Exciting, New Partnership

by Randy Murbach

On Friday, October 12, 2001, Sprint Maryland Relay Account Manager Randy Murbach presented Maryland Relay's *Kids Keeping In Touch* educational program to over 50 Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) members from across the State at the annual MAPLA conference in Ocean City. MAPLA members were thrilled to learn about this new educational kit for children and are eager to put program materials on display and into action at their respective libraries. Randy took the idea one step further by suggesting MAPLA members recruit deaf storytellers to hold programs in their libraries.

Randy's presentation also touched on the importance of reaching the senior citizen population and letting them know how Maryland Relay can help them keep in touch with family members, friends, and area businesses. Maryland Relay is thrilled about the new MAPLA partnership. Stay tuned for more information about future partnership developments.

## Make Plans to Become a Relay Partner Today!

The Maryland Relay Partner program, the first of its kind in the nation, was created to reduce and eventually eliminate hang ups experienced by Relay users when calling area businesses. This free program educates businesses and their employees about the proper use of Maryland Relay. The program benefits Relay users and participating businesses by helping each group feel confident about conducting business through Maryland Relay.



The overwhelming success of the program has made it impossible to allocate the necessary space in our newsletter to list every Relay Partner. However, we have created a Relay Partner directory and will continue to keep a complete list of Relay Partners on our Web site at [www.mdrelay.org](http://www.mdrelay.org). For a free copy of this directory, contact Maryland Relay Customer Service. Listed on the right are the newest Relay Partners. We will continue to print any new partners in our newsletter as they join the program. Featured below are brief guidelines for Relay Partner Program participants:

### Relay Users:

The next time you make a business call, make it to a Relay Partner. When you call a Relay Partner, you can be sure that the business has received proper education and training about making and receiving Maryland Relay calls. And of course, Relay Partners welcome Relay users as customers.

### Business Professionals:

Becoming a Relay Partner can bring a world of customers to your phone. An estimated 500,000 people in Maryland are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or speech disabled. Maryland Relay allows this important consumer group to communicate with any standard phone user—including your business. Make plans today to join the hundreds of Maryland businesses that already are Relay Partners.

### It's easy (and free!) to become a Relay Partner.

All Relay Partners receive Maryland Relay educational materials and training sessions to learn how to make and receive Relay calls. In addition, Maryland Relay actively promotes the names of Relay Partners to the deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, speech disabled and senior citizen populations. To learn more about becoming a Relay Partner or to schedule free, onsite training session, contact Maryland Relay Customer Service at 1-800-552-7724, or e-mail [moreinfo@mdrelay.org](mailto:moreinfo@mdrelay.org).

**Please send me information about RELAY PARTNER.**

_____		_____	
<i>Name</i>		<i>Title</i>	
_____			
<i>Company</i>			
_____			
<i>Address</i>			
_____			
<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip</i>	
_____			
<i>Phone Number</i>			

**Please mail to:**  
 Maryland Relay  
 Department of Budget & Management  
 301 West Preston Street  
 Suite 1008 A  
 Baltimore, MD 21201



## Relay Partner List Keeps Growing

Listed below and arranged by category are the newest Relay Partners:

**Apartment Complexes**  
**Partners Management, LLC**  
 Towson, MD  
 410-821-3723

**Automotive Services**  
**Mr. Tire**  
 Mall Circle  
 Waldorf, MD  
 301-396-3817

**Beauty Salons**  
**George of New York**  
**Hair Design**  
 Columbia, MD  
 410-740-7477

**Home Builders**  
**Masonry Homes**  
 Manchester, MD  
 410-239-8330

**Insurance and Financial Planning**  
**Gateway Capital**  
**Financial Planning Group**  
 Linthicum, MD  
 410-981-4120

**Merrill Lynch**  
 Stephen Hilbok  
 Columbia, MD  
 410-884-6660

**Prudential Carruthers**  
 Mark Anthony Ennis  
 Lutherville, MD  
 410-561-9477

**Medical Care**  
**Pearle Vision Express**  
 Columbia, MD  
 410-730-0007

**Quest Diagnostics**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 410-536-1414

**Civista Health**  
 LaPlata, MD  
 301-609-4394

**Not-for-Profit Organizations**  
**Making Choices for Independent Living**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 410-444-1400

**The League for People with Disabilities**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 410-323-0500

**South East Sr. Housing Initiative**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 410-327-6193

**Photo and Digital Imaging**  
**Perskie Photographics**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 301-731-4420  
 410-661-6613

**State and County Governments**  
**Calvert Library**  
 Prince Frederick, MD  
 410-535-0291

## Kids Keeping In Touch Makes its Debut

After years of dreaming, months of planning and weeks of writing and producing, *Kids Keeping In Touch*, a hearing loss awareness program is ready for classrooms across the State. Geared toward students in grades three through five, but easily adaptable to other grade levels, this comprehensive program teaches school-aged children about hearing loss. Maryland Relay hopes exposure to the program will encourage students to spread the word to their parents, friends and relatives about the benefits of Maryland Relay.

The program consists of four units: The Human Body, Society and Culture, Technology and Communication and Students-to-Students.

Each unit includes transparencies, teacher guides and student handouts. *Kids Keeping In Touch* also features an extensive resource page with suggestions and support for implementing the program.

*Kids Keeping In Touch* was initially launched as a pilot program and distributed to several teachers of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. These teachers—from Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Howard, and Baltimore Counties—were asked to introduce the program to their students, as well as to parents and faculty members and provide the TAM office with feedback.

Pilot program participant Jane Smith discovered that hearing children

were enthusiastic about learning how to communicate with their peers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Danelle Chapman, a Shipley's Choice Elementary School teacher of students who are deaf reported that her students were thrilled to learn how to use Maryland Relay to keep in touch with their hearing peers and family members.

The kit comes complete with several visual materials, including the *Let's Make Maryland Relay Call* video, *Sign Me A Story* video, the *A Button in Her Ear* book, an activity book and a hearing loss awareness poster. The program serves as an excellent tool to promote Maryland Relay and disability awareness among all students and teachers.



Free copies of *Kids Keeping In Touch* are now available to all education professionals. For more information, contact Nancy Seidman at 1-800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY), or e-mail [nancy@mdrelay.org](mailto:nancy@mdrelay.org).

### CLIP-N-SAVE

## MARYLAND RELAY CONTACT NUMBERS 7-1-1 in Maryland

**1-800-735-2258** TTY/HCO

**1-800-877-1264** Spanish

**1-800-201-7165** Voice

**1-900-344-3323**  
pay-per-call English

**1-888-VCO-WORD** VCO  
(1-888-826-9673)

**1-900-344-4889**  
pay-per-call Spanish

**1-800-785-5630**  
Speech-to-Speech

**1-800-552-7724**  
Customer Service

**1-877-735-5151** ASCII

[www.mdrelay.org](http://www.mdrelay.org)  
[moreinfo@mdrelay.org](mailto:moreinfo@mdrelay.org)

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