

Around the Country

NEW VIDEOS HELP USERS LEARN ULTRATEC TTY FEATURES



Ultratec, Inc. has introduced new videotapes that help people use their TTYs. The open-captioned videotapes provide easy-to-follow

instructions for the various features in several of Ultratec's TTYs. There are videos for the Superprint 4425 desktop TTY; the Uniphone 1140 combination TTY and telephone; and all three of Ultratec's Superprint Pro80 Series: Pro80 (standard 1x32 character display); Pro80 GOLD (2-line display); and the Pro80 LVD (built-in Large Visual Display).

Each 20-minute video lead viewers through step-by-step demonstrations of the commonly-used TTY features on each of the three Pro80 models. Many topics are covered, including basic TTY etiquette, how to set-up a TTY, how to make and answer a TTY call, how to use the auto-answering feature, and many other modern features. Contact your local Ultratec dealer or call 1-800-482-2424 V/TTY. Be sure to specify the TTY model when ordering.

CRYSTALLTONE™ RINGER - EXCEPTIONALLY LOUD!

The latest in Ultratec's line of amplified telephone products, the CrystalTone telephone ringer, allows the telephone ring signal to be as loud as 95dB, louder than most ringers on the market today. Ideal for anyone who has difficulty hearing the ringing of the telephone, whether its due to hearing loss or a noisy environment, the ringer can be installed directly on the telephone and set to the most comfortable frequency and ringing patterns



For more information about Ultratec's products, visit: www.ultratec.com

"RISE 'N SHINE" DEVICE SIMULATES SUNRISE

A dimmer light on a timer that gradually increases illumination so that a sleeper would not be shattered awake by a blaring alarm clock was invented by Nguyen Hu Ha, a business major at Drexel University.

Mr. Ha invented the "Rise 'N Shine" which includes a dimming device connected with a timer that turns on a lamp at a pre-set time. According to Ha, the lamp slowly begins to simulate sunrise if it is set as a device to replace an alarm clock.

Nguyen said, "I find it rather difficult to wake up...I needed something to simulate the sunrise." As he explains, "This gradual increase of light allows for the user to wake up gradually without the shock of a loud alarm clock or someone turning on the light in your eyes."

One of the advantages, according to Ha, is that the device simply screws into the base, which "looks something like a light bulb and is easy to use." Domes in a variety of soft colors would be connected to the light to simulate a soft sunrise in pale oranges and pinks. He said the brightness could be adjusted manually and the device can be switched to a manual dimmer.



For more information on "Rise 'N Shine", see <http://www.ipmg-inc.com/1572nh/index.html>

AFTER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE, TEXAS SELECTS SPRINT FOR 3RD TIME

*New Video & Other Advanced Relay Services
Now Available to Lone Star Consumers*

For the third consecutive time, the State of Texas has chosen Sprint to provide Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) for the state's deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled consumers.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas selected Sprint to provide the service for five years, with full-time service scheduled to begin Sept. 1, 2000. Sprint will handle approximately 400,000 relay calls per month for Texas, most of which will be processed within the state at Sprint call centers in Austin and Lubbock. The project is worth about \$75 million.

Sprint's relationship with the State of Texas dates back to 1990 when the state awarded Sprint its first contract for relay services. Since then, Sprint has become the country's leading provider of relay services, with contracts in 27 states and with the federal government.

"We consider the leading relay customer, and we are thrilled that the state has opted to renew its long-standing relationship with Sprint," said



state of Texas our president and general manager at Sprint Government Systems Division in Herndon, Va. "Many of the technical innovations -- such as video relay -- which Sprint has introduced to deaf and hard-of-hearing customers were first launched in Texas. We plan to continue that tradition over the next five years and beyond."

With the state's decision to renew its relationship with Sprint, Texas consumers will continue to receive extremely reliable, high-capacity service ensuring successful relay calls even under the most adverse conditions. Consumers will benefit from the most technically advanced relay services including voice carry-over, in which a person with a hearing disability is able to speak directly to the other end user; hearing carryover, in which a person with a speech disability is able to listen to the other user; speech-to-speech relay service for persons with certain speech disabilities; and bilingual service for users who speak Spanish.

"Over the last 10 years, Sprint has used Relay Texas as a flagship for quality service, and we look forward to obtaining the same standard of service for the next five years," said Ed Bosson, Relay Texas Administrator at the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

BELL ATLANTIC SEMINAR ADDRESSES DEAF & HARD-OF-HEARING NEEDS

Advancements in communications technologies for the deaf and hard-of-hearing was the focus of Bell Atlantic's eighth annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day, May 18 in New York City. Attendees learned about improvements in New York's Telecommunications Relay Service and special 9-1-1 enhancements.



"Bell Atlantic has a long-time commitment to serving the deaf community," said John Rollo, Bell Atlantic executive director for Community Affairs. "We're encouraged that there is a growing recognition of the contributions the deaf community continues to make to society. This is especially important since the issues raised by this important group of customers affect both deaf and hearing people."

INTERNET USERS: Bell Atlantic news releases and other useful information are available at Bell Atlantic's News Center on the World Wide Web (www.ba.com).

Around the Country

GOAMERICA TO ACQUIRE WYND COMMUNICATIONS AND ITS UNIQUE WIRELESS INSTANT MESSAGING TECHNOLOGY

GoAmerica
Your Wireless ISP™
Wireless Email and Internet... To Go!™

GoAmerica, Inc., a nationwide wireless Internet services provider, announced today that it has signed a definitive merger agreement to acquire Wynd Communications Corporation, the leading provider of wireless telecommunications services for people who are deaf, or hard of hearing. Wynd's unique wireless instant messaging technology will add capability to the breadth of GoAmerica's services. Wynd will continue to focus on its current markets, operating as a wholly owned subsidiary of GoAmerica. The closing of the acquisition is subject to certain conditions, including the consent of Wynd's shareholders.

Commenting on the acquisition, Aaron Dobrinsky, President and Chief Executive Officer of GoAmerica stated, "There are three key reasons for GoAmerica to make this acquisition: innovative technology that will expand our total capabilities; strong customer franchises that are expected to grow extremely rapidly and a strong management team that will help to build our company."

Innovative Technology — GoAmerica will incorporate Wynd's new wireless instant messaging technology into Go.Web. Instant messaging will enhance the user's experience and will provide both businesses and consumers with the ability to communicate interactively on virtually any wireless device anytime, anywhere.

Major Growth Potential — Wynd has a rapidly growing customer base of more than 4,500 subscribers. Subscriber revenues for 1999 were \$1.4 million with a gross margin of 52%. Wynd has achieved early success with distinctive services for a large under-served market. According to the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), there are 42 million Americans with varying levels of hearing and/or speech loss for whom cell phones and other telecommunications are not well suited. By combining forces with GoAmerica, Wynd is expected to continue to be a leader in its market. With the added capabilities and resources provided by GoAmerica, Wynd can now accelerate its marketing initiatives and jointly seek to significantly expand its customer base.

Strong Management — Dobrinsky, commenting on the addition of Wynd's CEO to his team, said, "Dan Luis brings to GoAmerica an expertise in wireless technologies and specialized markets as well as a track record for growing Wynd Communications. Under his leadership, Wynd's subscriber base has increased nearly 400 percent since 1998, while gross margins improved more than 100 percent. We look forward to his major contributions to all of GoAmerica's businesses."

Dan Luis, President and CEO of Wynd, commented, "Merging with GoAmerica is good for Wynd on many levels. Their commitment to retaining Wynd's focus will enable our management to deliver the kind of results that are possible in this market and reach Wynd's full potential. I look forward to both the opportunity and the challenge."

About GoAmerica — GoAmerica, Inc. is a nationwide wireless Internet service provider based in Hackensack, NJ. GoAmerica enables its individual and business subscribers to access remotely the Internet, email and corporate intranets in real time by delivering its proprietary technology through a wide variety of mobile computing and wireless network devices. For more information, call 888-462-4600 or visit www.goamerica.net.

About Wynd Communications — Wynd Communications, based in San Luis Obispo, California, is the nation's leading provider of wireless telecommunications services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information about Wynd Communications and WyndTell, visit the Wynd Web site at <http://www.wynd.com>, or contact Wynd directly at TTY 800-549-2800 or e-mail: info@wynd.com.



A PHONE OF OUR OWN

The Deaf Insurrection Against Ma Bell

Written by Dr. Harry G. Lang



In 1964, of the more than 85 million telephones in the United States and Canada, less than one percent were used regularly by deaf people. If they didn't ask their hearing neighbors for help, they depended upon their hearing children, some as young as three years old, to act as intermediaries for business calls or medical consultations. In that same year, three enterprising deaf men, Robert H. Weitbrecht, James C. Marsters, and Andrew Saks, started the process that led to deaf people around the world having an affordable phone system that they could use.

Weitbrecht, a successful physicist with the Stanford Research Institute, had been experimenting with a teletypewriter (TTY) used with shortwave radios. When Marsters, a prominent deaf orthodontist, met Weitbrecht and saw his TTY, he immediately suggested the possibility of resolving deaf people's decades-long struggle to have access to telecommunications without relying totally upon hearing people as go-betweens. Andrew Saks brought his business acumen to the group, which soon set to work overcoming the daunting problems they faced.

Harry Lang's *A Phone of Their Own: The Deaf Insurrection Against Ma Bell* tells how these three men collaborated to solve the technical difficulties of developing a coupling device for TTYs that would translate sounds into discernible letters. More remarkably, and with the help of an expanding corps of Deaf advocates, they successfully assaulted the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T), which in its efforts to protect its monopoly, smashed old TTYs to keep them from being used for potentially competitive purposes. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) also resisted efforts to build a telephone system for deaf people that was available, affordable, portable, and fully accessible. Lang recounts in vivid terms how many other Deaf individuals and groups from all walks of life joined Weitbrecht, Marsters, and Saks against these forces. *A Phone of Their Own* is an entertaining and engrossing story of how they fought and won, and changed the world for the better for deaf people everywhere.

Harry G. Lang is Professor/Research Associate at the Center for Research, Teaching and Learning at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, NY.



This book can be ordered from the Gallaudet University Press for \$29.95 (ISBN 1-56368-090-4, 6 x 9 hardcover, 256 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography, index).

ACCESS BOARD ACTIONS



The Access Board puts out a Market Monitoring Report (MMR), by Jim Tobias. The MMR tracks what high-tech companies are doing to make the Internet, cell phones, computers, etc. more accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. The website for it is <http://www.access-board.gov/MMR>