

CSD Presents Award to Albert Berke



Berke was a key community member advocating equal rights and accessibility for Alaska deaf and hard of hearing individuals when Alaska's history with telecommunications relay service began during early 1980's. Berke was president of Alaska Association of the Deaf (AAD), when Alaska TRS was first operated on volunteer basis under AAD, around 1987. This arrangement continued until 1992. For the next ten years, until 2002, the Alaska TRS was operated by GCI, a local telephone service. In 2002, the Regulatory Commission of Alaska awarded the TRS contract to CSD, a deaf-owned and deaf-operated corporation with extensive experience in providing TRS access in other states.

Without Berke, Alaska Relay may not exist. Berke's tireless and continuous advocacy contributed significantly to the present level of TRS availability for deaf and hard of hearing Alaskans. As we enter a new age of Internet and video relay service availability, we need to remember that these services are available to deaf and hard of hearing Alaskans because of the efforts of Albert Berke and those who stood beside him.

Alaska Relay provides TRS and VRS services to deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Alaska. Alaska Relay is operated by CSD with CSD of Alaska offices located in Anchorage, Alaska.

CSD presented a plaque to Albert Berke in appreciation of his long-time devotion to the development of Alaska Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). The award reads "CSD recognizes the dedication and commitment of Albert Berke for his outstanding service to Alaska Telecommunications Relay Service, 2005." From left to right: Darrell Campbell, Ryan Thompson, Jim Rowe, Pam Mueller-Guy. Middle: Albert Berke

CSD presented Albert Berke with a plaque recognizing his dedication, commitment and outstanding service to Alaska Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Berke was one of

the key players whose support was instrumental to CSD's successful bid for Alaska Relay in 2001. He sits on the Alaska Relay Advisory Board as an honorary member, serving since 2002.

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CSDVRS

Innovative Video Relay Services Launched by CSD

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (3/31/2005)

CSD, a leader in services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, has launched CSDVRS, an innovative service where a caller using sign language communicates with a live video interpreter via a video connection. The video interpreter signs the telephone conversation with the sign language user and voices to the hearing person, who uses a standard telephone.

Users of nearly all videophone equipment brands will be able to access CSDVRS via high-speed Internet connection. Sign language users can use PCs and web cams with NetMeeting software or single D-Link devices.

Hearing callers dial a toll-free number (1-800-538-9881) on their telephone and give the Internet protocol (IP) address of the deaf or hard of hearing consumer they wish to connect to.

CSDVRS is available Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. CST and on weekends/holidays from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. CST by going to www.csdvrs.com.

As the first deaf-owned VRS provider in the country, CSD is capitalizing on its 30 years of experience in providing sign language interpreting, telecommunications and video

relay services, and call center operations. In addition to fast connections, CSDVRS offers callers professional, certified sign language interpreters and seamless conversations, where facial expressions and nuances can be portrayed spontaneously.



With the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and other major legislation in recent years mandating equal access to communications and telecommunications services, qualified and certified interpreters are in high demand. As not to impose significant drain on local interpreter resources in any specific part of the country, CSDVRS coordinates joint alliances with vendors through ten video relay centers in the U.S. All vendors share CSD's approach to balancing local community needs with CSDVRS manpower requirements.

"As a deaf-owned and deaf-operated organization, we are extremely conscious not to drain local sign language interpreting

resources," says Benjamin J. Soukup, CEO of CSD. "This has been a major issue with many local deaf communities across the U.S."

CSD and Sprint are long-time partners in offering video relay services. Beginning in 1994, CSD and Sprint participated in several state-sponsored trials to develop the video relay concept. To meet the needs of consumers who use sign language as their primary method of communication, CSD and Sprint then launched the first nationwide service, now known as Sprint Video Relay Service (VRS), in May 2002.

CSD remains fully committed as a partner with Sprint and continues its close working relationship in providing telecommunications relay services and video relay services nationwide.

"Sprint and CSD view this service as an opportunity to expand options available to VRS users nationwide," says Tony D'Agata, vice president and general manager, Sprint Government Systems Division.

Demand for VRS has intensified in recent years. Consumers who use sign language as their primary mode of communication appreciate the quicker pace and more natural flow of VRS conversations. It is proving to be a significant communication alternative for those who are not comfortable using written English and/or find the physical act of typing on a text telephone to be challenging.



CSD/Alaska Relay
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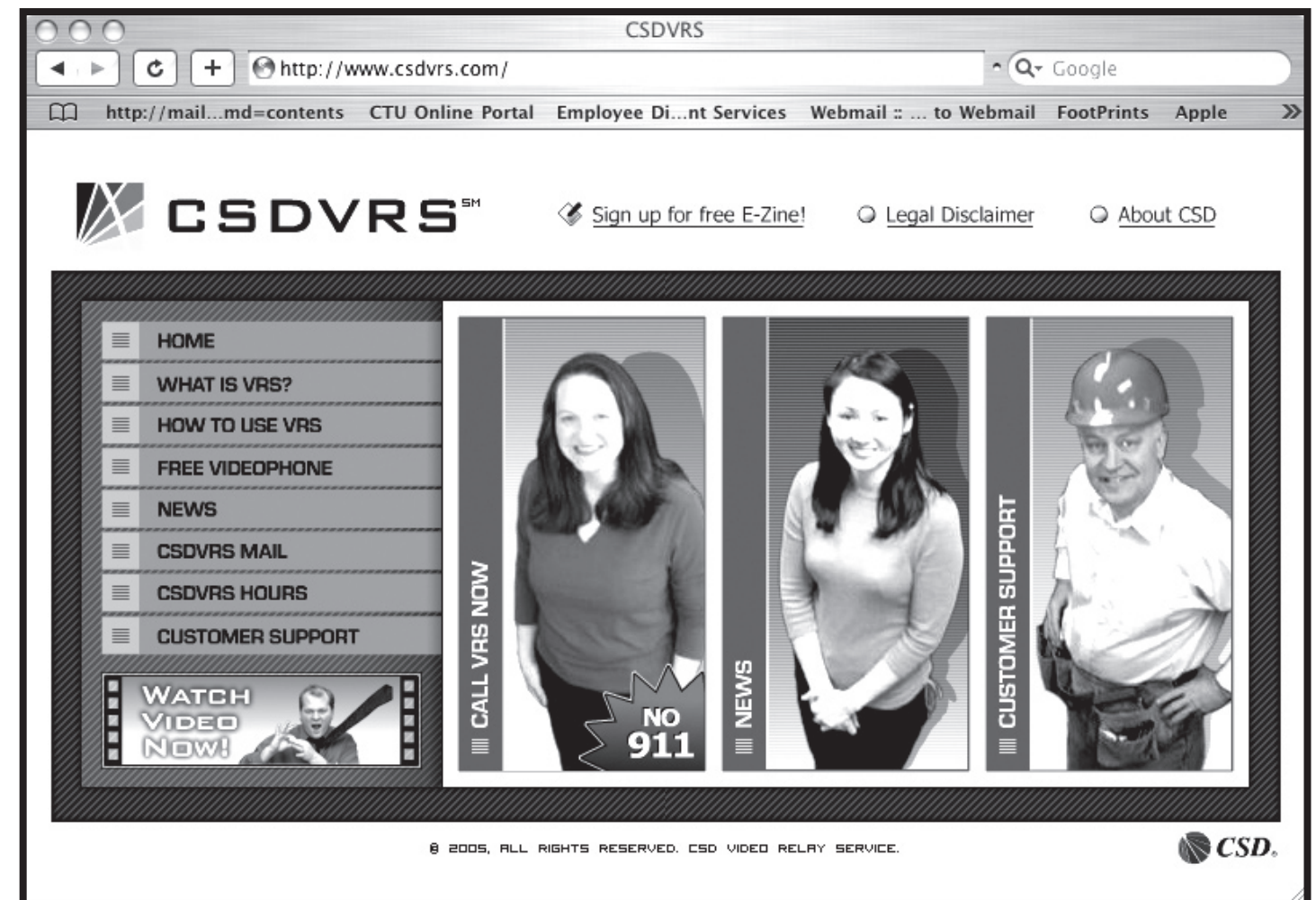
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TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE

CSD Launches New Video Relay Services: CSDVRS



<http://www.csdvrs.com>

CSD's newest service is CSDVRS, a fast, reliable VRS option for people who don't like to have to spend a lot of time waiting. CSDVRS connects users directly to highly skilled Video Interpreters, enabling an experience that is closer to true equivalence with the services hearing callers enjoy. Check out www.CSDVRS.com or csdvrs.tv through D-Link.

CSD/Alaska Relay

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