



NEWS & INFORMATION

350 Maple Street • Des Moines, Iowa 50319 • 515.281.5979

Diane Munns, Member

John Norris, Chairman

Curt Stamp, Member

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Contact: Rob Hillesland 515.281.3551

Email: rob.hillesland@iub.state.ia.us

Web site: www.state.ia.us/iub

Iowa Commences New Captioned Telephone Service for Those with Reduced Hearing

In January 2007, the State of Iowa will begin offering a new service called CapTel™ Relay for individuals who have difficulty hearing on the telephone. It will provide captions for the telephone similar to the closed captioning provided on most television programs.

“The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) is pleased that Iowa is offering this new program, which will enable hard-of-hearing individuals to communicate more effectively on the telephone,” said IUB Chairman John Norris.

In addition to Iowa’s traditional telecommunications relay service, known as Relay Iowa, the IUB will now oversee this new and specialized relay service. A CapTel phone is perfect for individuals who have good speech, but do not hear well over the phone. Hard-of-hearing callers may talk and listen normally, but with a CapTel phone they may also read word-for-word captions of the other party’s conversation on a built-in screen. Specially trained operators “re-voice” everything said by the other party into voice-recognition technology, which converts speech into the text so that it can be read on the CapTel phone’s screen. The captions appear almost simultaneously with the spoken word, allowing CapTel users to better understand everything that is said because they can both hear and read it. This allows hard-of-hearing individuals to enjoy naturally flowing, interactive conversations. The CapTel phone features adjustable levels of amplification. It is not a TTY (text telephone with a keyboard); rather it is a telephone designed to allow the user to have natural back and forth telephone conversations with the support of captions.

Telecommunications Access Iowa administers the Iowa Equipment Distribution Program, which helps qualified individuals who are hearing and/or speech impaired to pay for specialized telephone equipment. The CapTel telephone will be added to this equipment distribution program in January 2007. For more information on how to apply for a CapTel phone, or other types of specialized telephone equipment, contact:

Telecommunications Access Iowa
6925 Hickman Road
Des Moines, IA 50322
800-606-5099 Voice
515-282-5099 Voice
515-282-5130 TTY
515-237-3917 FAX
TELEIOWA@aol.com

For questions about CapTel Relay or Relay Iowa, contact:

Relay Iowa
888-516-4692 Voice/TTY
iarelay@hamiltonrelay.com

Telecommunications Access Iowa, CapTel Relay, and Relay Iowa are all programs of the IUB. Relay Iowa is a telephone relay service that links deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired, and hearing users to each other for communication over the telephone.

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*CapTel is a trademark and service mark of Ultratec, Inc.