

2-1-2005

Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Winter / Spring 2005

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened

Nancy Melanson

Maine Department of Labor, Nancy.A.Melanson@Maine.gov

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalmaine.com/rehab_docs

Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Labor; Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; Maine Division of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Late Deafened; and Melanson, Nancy, "Maine-Lines: A Newsletter for People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened, Winter / Spring 2005" (2005). *Rehabilitation Services/Disability Services Documents*. 29.

https://digitalmaine.com/rehab_docs/29

DIVISION OF DEAFNESS

MAINE-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING OR LATE-DEAFENED

Introducing NexTalk!



(Communicating with NexTalk)

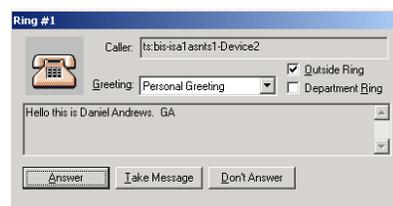
NexTalk is a computer based TTY system. Instead of making and receiving calls through a traditional TTY, calls are made and received using a desktop personal computer (PC). Calls can be made from a TTY to a PC...PC to PC...and PC to TTY. Messages are typed back and forth; not unlike 'instant messaging' or traditional TTY calls.



(Menu of NexTalk)

The State of Maine has purchased a server that enables selected state employees to receive and make TTY calls through NexTalk. This new system is replacing most of the TTYs in state government. A TTY will be available for customer use if voice phones are available for hearing customers. NexTalk is more user-friendly for state workers than traditional TTYs.

It is very simple software to learn and use. For state employees to view what NexTalk is all about, go to inet.state.me.us/nexstalk/. To view NexTalk from outside state government, go to www.nextalk.net/.



(Dialogue box of NexTalk)

Callers using TTY's may notice new local numbers but the toll free (1-800 & 1-888) numbers should remain the same. TTY callers will notice that their calls will be answered either by a "live" person or a message tells them exactly what to do. You will always have an option to reach a "live" person for help during normal business hours.

The Department of Labor (DOL) is piloting NexTalk. Other departments will be added after the pilot is complete and problems have been solved. There will be a listing of all State TTY numbers in the TTY Directory. The Division of Deafness numbers have not changed. Please see the insert of this newsletter for the new TTY numbers for the Department of Labor.

For more information, please contact Floyd White at 624-9437 (V), 1-888-577-6690 (TTY) or Lisa Thompson at 624-9411 (V), 1-888-577-6690 (TTY). Report problems to the designated person responsible for NexTalk in your department.



(NexTalk/TTY Symbol)

Introducing NexTalk!



NexTalk is a computer based TTY system. Instead of making and receiving calls through a traditional TTY, calls are made and received using a desktop personal computer (PC). Calls can be made from a TTY to a PC...PC to PC...and PC to TTY. Messages are typed back and forth; not unlike 'instant messaging' or traditional TTY calls.

This new system is replacing most of the TTYs in state government. Selected state employees will be able to receive and make TTY calls through NexTalk. There may be some changes in TTY numbers for state government. Below are the new TTY numbers for the Department of Labor. More state departments will be changing over soon.

Department of Labor/Bureau/Division	TTY Number
Augusta CareerCenter	800-633-0770
Augusta Vocational Rehabilitation - Debbie Myers	800-633-0770
Augusta Vocational Rehabilitation - Virginia Pelletier	800-633-0770
Bangor CareerCenter	800-498-6711
Bangor Vocational Rehabilitation - Dale Ruopp	800-498-6711
Bath CareerCenter	888-697-2871
Calais CareerCenter	888-697-2883
Division of Deafness	888-755-0023
Dover-Foxcroft CareerCenter	888-697-2898
Ellsworth CareerCenter	888-697-2892
Houlton CareerCenter	888-697-2897
Lewiston CareerCenter	877-796-9833
Lewiston Vocational Rehabilitation	877-796-9833
Machias CareerCenter	800-381-9932
Machias Vocational Rehabilitation	800-381-9932
Main Operator, Administrative Hearings, Commissioner, Customer Service, Employment Services, Human Resources, Labor Market Information Services, Labor Standards	800-794-1110
Portland CareerCenter	888-817-7113
Portland Vocational Rehabilitation - Rod MacInnes	877-612-4800
Presque Isle CareerCenter	888-697-2877
Rehabilitation Services Central Office	800-749-5356
Rockland CareerCenter	800-498-9262
Rockland Vocational Rehabilitation	800-498-9262
Rumford/So. Paris CareerCenter	888-313-9400
Saco CareerCenter	800-492-0670
Saco Vocational Rehabilitation - Denise Linsmith	800-492-0670
Skowhegan CareerCenter	888-697-2912
Springvale CareerCenter	888-697-2913
Unemployment Call Center	888-457-8884
Waterville CareerCenter	888-697-2890
Wilton CareerCenter	888-697-2895
Wilton Vocational Rehabilitation	888-697-2895

Emergency Alert Notification System Unveiled

March 11, 2005

AUGUSTA - At a Blaine House ceremony in March, Governor John Baldacci announced the launching of a statewide emergency alert notification system for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Representatives from the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the Division of Deafness (DoD), the Maine Center on Deafness (MCD), and others who worked closely together to develop the new service joined the Governor.

“This state-of-the-art emergency alert and notification system for deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Maine is the most sophisticated and comprehensive of its kind in the nation,” said Governor Baldacci. “The unique partnership between MEMA, the DoD, and the MCD has made this important service a reality. Maine now leads the nation in addressing this problem.”

The need for such a service was first identified during the Ice Storm of 1998, when widespread power outages trapped many Mainers in their homes. Hearing individuals were able to obtain information about the storm through their battery-powered radios. Deaf people, however, were isolated in their homes with no way to learn about the seriousness of the storm, how long it was expected to last, and when electric power would be restored.

Jan DeVinney, Director of the DoD, has experienced first hand the lack of communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. In her commute she has often missed notification of road and bridge closures broadcast over the radio. Jan has recently been using a one-way pager, which tells her about traffic problems so she can take different routes.

Last year the Legislature expanded the existing Telecommunication Equipment Program (TEP) to include emergency alert pagers. Funding for development of the alerts came from a Homeland Security grant. MEMA, DoD and MCD worked with the National Weather Service, Department of Transportation, Department of Public Safety, and the Bureau of Health. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) developed the alert system. Independent companies such as NorthEast Paging and Cingular also provided their expertise.

Depending on where deaf and hard-of-hearing people are located, one-way pagers, two-way pagers or NOAA weather alert radios with digital or amplified messages

are now being distributed through the TEP at MCD. Anyone in Maine with a hearing loss qualifies to obtain equipment. The cost is determined by income. Each person receiving equipment also receives training and a resource book with information about how to stay safe during different kinds of emergencies.

Jonathan Connick, Director of the MCD stated, “The program is up and running. We have equipment available and have developed a manual so that the system can help to ensure the safety of Maine’s 110,000 deaf and hard of hearing citizens.”

Tired of missing important information about bad weather, traffic jams, closed roads, etc.? Are you Deaf or hard of hearing? Contact MCD for more information about this program so you won’t be the last to know!

**Contact: Maine Center on Deafness
797-7656 (V/TTY)**

**1-800-639-3884 (toll-free in state only) (V/TTY)
797-9791 (FAX)**

E-mail: Ealert@mcdmaine.org



(Two-Way Pager)



(One-Way Pager)



(NOAA Weather Alert)

Incidental Learning

Hearing people get 75% of their information through aural means such as radio, television, and other people’s conversations. Therefore, 25% of information captured is through other methods.

Of this 25% of receivable information, deaf people acquire only half and sometimes even less.

Imagine all the information deaf people have missed throughout their life span.

THE OLD FOGEYS BY DAVID H. PIERCE



Myths About Deafness

Like all minority groups, deaf people suffer from stereotyping by many who don't know and understand them. A number of myths about deaf people circulate widely in our society and get in the way of understanding between hearing and deaf people.

MYTH: *All hearing losses are the same.*

FACT: The single term deafness covers a wide range of hearing losses that have very different effects on a person's ability to process sound and, thus, to understand speech.

MYTH: *All deaf people are mute.*

FACT: Some deaf people speak very well and clearly; others do not because their hearing loss prevented them from learning spoken language. Deafness usually has little effect on the vocal cords, and very few deaf people are truly mute.

MYTH: *People with hearing loss are "deaf and dumb".*

FACT: The inability to hear affects neither native intelligence nor the physical ability to produce sounds. Deaf people understandably find this stereotype particularly offensive.

MYTH: *All deaf people use hearing aids.*

FACT: Many deaf people benefit considerably from hearing aids. Many others do not; indeed, they find hearing aids to be annoying, and they choose not to use them.

MYTH: *Hearing aids restore hearing.*

FACT: Hearing aids amplify all sound. They have no effect on a person's ability to process that sound. In cases where a hearing loss distorts incoming sounds, a hearing aid can do nothing to correct this and may even make the distortion worse.

MYTH: *All deaf people can read lips.*

FACT: Some deaf people are very skilled lip-readers, but many are not. This is because many speech sounds have identical mouth movements. For example, p and b look exactly alike on the lips. Actually, only 30% of the English language is understandable on the lips.

Letter from Safer Place:

Hello Everyone,

We are writing to let you all know that we will have our last regular Safer Place meeting on Wednesday, April 13th, at MCD on Bishop Street in Portland. It will be from 4 to 6 pm.

A small group of former students and some professionals started Safer Place back in October of 1998. It is hard to believe that so much time has passed. This group came together and got a lot of work done. We developed goals for ourselves and helped change some laws. We spoke out to the State Legislature on many occasions to let them know about the abuse at the school and to tell them it was not right to ignore it anymore. The people in the Legislature listened. We all fought for the right for former students to receive ongoing counseling and for the right of monetary compensation for those who were harmed years ago. We all worked well as a team and we are proud of everyone. You are all so brave! So, as I said before, Safer Place will have just one more regular meeting on April 13th. If there is an emergency of some kind and we need to get together again, we will let you know and we will have a meeting at a later time.

Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA) will continue for another year and if you have any questions about BCA, where to get counseling or just want to know what's up, feel free to contact any of us. We are still around and working hard. At the bottom of this letter I will put the names of people you can contact if you have any questions. Thank you all. Take good care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Sara Treat, John Shattuck, Jan DeVinney, Jonathan Connick, and Meryl Troop
Sara Treat, 892-6814 (v/tty) place4safe@aol.com

Baxter Compensation Authority (BCA) Update (as of 7/05)

- ❖ 360 former students have contacted the BCA.
- ❖ 239 people have gone before the BCA panel.
- ❖ 230 have been found eligible for compensation.
- ❖ \$12,547,000 has been awarded to claimants.

March 31, 2006 is the deadline to file a claim to BCA for compensation. If anyone has any ideas on how to reach people who have not yet filed claims, please contact John Shattuck at the BCA. Contact numbers: 287-6712 (V), 287-6715 (TTY).

Legislative Updates

L.D. 404, An Act To Ensure the State's Continued Commitment to Former Students Who Were Physically or Sexually Abused at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf or the Maine School for the Deaf

There was a work session on April 14, 2005 to discuss the \$8.4 million appropriation.

7.1 million will be funded through the Cascade Fund and 1 million will be funded through the Supplemental Budget.

Everyone on the Appropriations Committee supported the bill, but they were not sure where the money was going to come from.

L.D. 446, An Act To Mandate the Bureau Of Motor Vehicles to Pay For Interpreters for Drivers' Education Public Law Chapter 411

This bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

When a deaf or hard of hearing person is required to complete a driver education course and examination, the Secretary of State shall provide and pay for a licensed interpreter or CART provider to allow for completion of the driver education course and examination.

Governor Baxter School for the Deaf and Maine Center on Deafness will work together to identify deaf individuals who want to take the classes.

The plan is to have eight interpreted drivers' education classes scheduled over the next year in four different areas of the state. The locations will be determined by where the students live who want to take the class.

L.D. 447, An Act to Require Health Insurers to Cover the Costs of Hearing Aids

The House and Senate passed this bill with an amendment to limit coverage to individuals under age 18 years with a \$1400 maximum allowance per hearing aid and replacement every 36 months.

There is a fiscal note attached because this bill will add mandated coverage to the health insurance plans of State employees. This bill has been referred to the Appropriations Committee for funding. If the money is appropriated it will go to the Governor for his signature. This bill was carried over until January, 2006, the 2nd half of the legislative session.

L.D. 448, An Act to Mandate Health Insurers to Cover the Cost of Interpreters for Non-hospital Appointments

The public hearing took place on February 24 and the work session on March 23, 2005. This bill was killed by a unanimous committee vote.

L.D. 583, An Act to Amend the Law Regarding the Use of "Hearing Dogs" by Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

The committee voted ought not to pass. Therefore, there will be no change to the law regarding the provision of ID cards for "hearing dogs" by the Division of Deafness.

L.D. 981, An Act to Add an Organizational Name to the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf Public Law Chapter 279

This bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

Legislation expanded the name of Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, it is now the *Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf*. This change will better reflect the programs and services provided at the educational center for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

**L.D. 1251, Resolve to Establish a System for Teacher Verification of Proficiency for Prelingually Deaf Candidates for Teacher Certification
Resolve Chapter 72**

This bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

This bill requires the State Board of Education to change the teacher certification rules so that Deaf teachers whose first language is American Sign Language (ASL), not English, will have another way to prove their proficiency without having to achieve a certain score on the Praxis (a national teachers' test).

The Department of Education will continue to issue targeted needs certificates while waiting for this new system to be developed even if the Deaf teacher has already reached the 3-year limit on those certificates.

**L.D. 1340, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Licensure of Interpreters for the Deaf
Public Law Chapter 267**

This bill was passed by the Legislature and has been signed by the Governor. This bill allows the score of 3.5 or higher on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) to qualify for 100 hours of ASL and 100 hours of interpreter training.

It removes the requirement that interpreters disclose training and experience on their disclosure forms and adds to the interpreter's certifications and any post-secondary degrees to the disclosure form.

It reduces the license fee for Deaf interpreters from \$300 to \$100, and it increases the number of continuing education hours from 15 to 20 for all interpreters per year. It also allows the Department of Licensing to raise the fees for hearing interpreters to \$325, but that will not happen now, the fee will stay at \$300.00.

**L.D. 1612, An Act to Mandate E 911 TDD Testing and Training
Resolve Chapter 63**

This bill was changed from an Act to a Resolve and does not require mandatory testing of E-911 centers as it was initially proposed.

It now directs the E-911 Bureau to set up stakeholder meetings including representatives from dispatch centers and the Maine Center on Deafness to find ways to ensure that calls from deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired people are handled the right way.

By January 15, 2006, the E-911 Bureau is required to report the results of the meetings to the Legislature.

**L.D. 1613, An Act to Promote the Use of Public Safety Telecommunications Equipment by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community
(Pager discount bill)
Public Law Chapter 336**

This bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

The bill will allow individuals who are at or below 135% of the Poverty Level a \$10/month discount on pager services that are used to receive emergency notification messages. The funding will be provided from the Universal Service Fund. Individuals need to apply to the DoD for the program that will be available by December 1, 2005.

Did you know?

- ❖ The YWCA in **Greater Portland** now offers **Mental Health Deaf Services**. The coordinator is **Jana Harbaugh, LCSW**. The YWCA is located at 87 Spring Street. The telephone number is 874-1130 (V only, please use relay). Jana's E-mail is: jharbaugh@ywcaptldme.org. The YWCA in greater Portland provides a limited number of shelter rooms for Deaf women. Counseling services are available to the Deaf; MaineCare or those who qualify for funding under the Survivor's fund (Safer Place) are accepted.
- ❖ There is a new **Program Director of Deaf Services at Community Counseling Center (CCC)**; his name is **Bruce Munro-Ludders, LCSW**. Bruce can be reached at Community Counseling Center, **NEW ADDRESS: 43 Baxter Boulevard in Portland**. His contact numbers are 874-1043 (TTY), 874-1030 (V), & **NEW FAX: 874-1173**. E-mail: bmludders@commcc.org
- ❖ **4th Maine Deaf TimberFest**, sponsored by the Maine Recreation Association of the Deaf (MeRAD), will take place August 18 – 21, 2005. It will be at the "Homestead by the River 'Family' Campground, Inc." in Biddeford on the Saco River. For more information, please contact Abby Bouchard, 854-1040 (TTY) or 854-2660 (FAX). E-mail: deaftimberfestME@aol.com or see the web site: www.medeafiesmsg.info.

❖ **Mark your calendars for the Deaf Awareness Week Events!**

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Maine Center on Deafness Open House
4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Friday, September 23, 2005

Talent Show, 6:30 PM – 10:00 PM
Scarborough High School

Saturday, September 24, 2005

CJ Jones, Deaf comedian performance
Scarborough High School (evening)

For more information contact the Maine Center on Deafness at 797-7656 (V/TTY), 1-800-639-3884 (toll-free in state only) (V/TTY), or 797-9791 (FAX).

- ❖ **NEW: Self Help for the Hard of Hearing (SHHH).** Support Group is now meeting every month in the central Maine area. SHHH is a volunteer, international association of hard-of-hearing people, their relatives, and friends. It is a nonprofit, educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. For further information contact Marianne Winnett at 685-3885 (V) or E-mail: creativeharmony@peoplepc.com.

The southern Maine SHHH chapter needs a leader; if interested, please contact the National SHHH at 301-657-2248 (V); 301-657-2249 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (FAX); or E-mail: national@shhh.org.

- ❖ The next **Division of Deafness Advisory Council meeting** is **October 27, 2005**. The meeting starts at **5:30 P.M. and ends at 8:15 P.M.** It will be held at the **Department of Public Safety, 45 Commerce Drive, "Fallen Heroes" room, Augusta (formerly the SCI building, off Civic Center Drive)**. Please call the Division of Deafness at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter for directions or information. This meeting is open to the public.
- ❖ **ASL NEWS** is organized at the Maine Center on Deafness. The meetings take place in Bangor and Portland and allow the Deaf community to come together and discuss issues they face. Discussion topics change every month.

Please contact the Maine Center on Deafness for more information at 797-7656 (V/TTY) or 1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY) outside the Portland area.

- ❖ **Maine Center on Deafness now has a Scribe Program.** This program can help deaf and hard-of-hearing people understand any hard to read papers or forms. The program is every Monday from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., or by appointment at MCD. Contact Jonathan Connick, 1-800-639-3884 (V/TTY).
- ❖ **Alpha One now has a Walk-In Clinic for American Sign Language (ASL) Users.** This clinic will have signing staff to help ASL users with letters, forms and general issues on Thursdays, 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. (also available other days and times by appointment). This is at the South Portland Alpha One office on 127 Main Street. Please contact Lisa Rouelle or John Dunleavy at 767-2189 (V/TTY).
- ❖ **Identification Cards Available for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing People.** The Division of Deafness has ID cards to offer to anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing. The laminated cards are produced at the Division of Deafness, and they are free of charge.
- Applications and examples of the cards are available by calling the Division at the numbers listed on the last page of this newsletter, or visit DoD's website at www.maine.gov/rehab/dod.
- ❖ **Safer Place:** Were you physically abused (slapped, pushed, hair pulled) by teachers or staff at Governor Baxter School for the Deaf or Maine School for the Deaf? Were you sexually abused (touched on your body or forced to have sex) by teachers, staff, or other students?
Contact Safer Place:
(207) 892-6814 (V/TTY)
(207) 892-6602 (FAX) or
E-mail: place4safe@aol.com
- ❖ **Maine-Lines, Anyone?**
Give *Maine-Lines* to a friend. Encourage them to sign up for mailings. All we need are names and addresses sent to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Deafness, Attn: Nancy Melanson, 150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 or e-mail to Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov.

Maine Department of Labor
Division of Deafness
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150

Return Service Requested

**PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 8
AUGUSTA, ME 04330**

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Jill Duson, Director

Division of Deafness

The Division of Deafness provides a program of services to Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late-deafened citizens of Maine, which includes: information and referral, advocacy, and accessibility promotion.

Jan DeVinney, Director
150 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0150
Tel: 624-5964 (TTY only)

E-mail: Jan.A.DeVinney@maine.gov

Alice Crandall Johnson
Rehabilitation Consultant
624-5966 (TTY/V)

E-mail: Alice.C.Johnson@maine.gov

Web site: www.maine.gov/rehab/dod

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director
Tel: 624-5965 (TTY), 624-5963 (V)
1-888-755-0023 (TTY) (within Maine only)
1-800-698-4440 (V) (within Maine only)
624-5980 (FAX)

E-mail: Nancy.A.Melanson@maine.gov

*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*