

**NEWS from the N.D. Department of Human Services
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New Technology Center set to open in Minot
Latest in assistive technology showcased

MINOT, N.D. – In an effort to meet a growing demand by North Dakota business owners and employees, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, through its Rehabilitation Consulting and Services (RCS) initiative, is opening an assistive technology lab on October 27, 2008. The lab is located at the Town and Country Center, 1015 S. Broadway, Suite 21, in Minot.

The “*SOLUTIONS using AT*” Assistive Technology Lab will showcase technology devices that address disability issues. Employers, employees, and job seekers will have an opportunity to explore available technologies and to try equipment.

“The technology on display promotes independence and functionality at school and work, and covers a wide range of needs including computer access, hearing, vision, learning, memory, and organization needs,” explained Brenda Vennes, Minot RCS Consultant and Assistive Technology Coordinator.

The Minot lab is the third assistive technology lab that the department has established in North Dakota, after Bismarck and Grand Forks. All labs are intended to build awareness of potential solutions to disability-related issues that affect the state’s workforce.

“We are excited about the new lab because of its potential benefit to residents of north central and northwestern North Dakota,” said Nancy McKenzie, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation. “In light of the state’s need for quality workers, this lab gives individuals with permanent injuries, illnesses, or impairments a chance to see and use technology that may help them enter the workforce or maintain their current employment.”

“It also gives business owners and employers a chance to view technology that may keep productive employees on the job should they incur a disability,” McKenzie said.

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation is a division of the North Department of Human Services. Its primary mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment opportunities. The Rehabilitation Consulting and Services initiative helps North Dakota business owners and employers find solutions to disability-related issues.

To schedule an appointment at the “*SOLUTIONS using AT*” Lab, call RCS Consultant and Assistive Technology Coordinator Brenda Vennes, at 701-857-8651. Watch for details about an open house and ribbon-cutting event slated for mid-November.

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