



NEWS & INFORMATION

1375 E. Court Ave, RM 69 • Des Moines, Iowa 50319 • 515.725.7300

Elizabeth S. Jacobs, Chair Darrell Hanson, Member Swati A. Dandekar, Member

Contact: Rob Hillesland, 515.725.7322 or rob.hillesland@iub.iowa.gov

Iowa Utilities Board to administer the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program for Iowa

July 16, 2012 (Des Moines) – Every American should have the ability to use our nation's communications services. However, accessibility barriers have prevented many people who are deaf-blind from enjoying the benefits of telecommunications and Internet systems used by most Americans. On July 2, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced the launch of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) to address this problem and selected the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) as the entity certified to participate in the NDBEDP for Iowa.

The goal of the federally funded two-year pilot program is to ensure individuals who are deaf-blind and meet the FCC eligibility requirements will receive the specialized customer premises equipment (CPE) they need to effectively access telecommunications services, Internet access services, and advanced communications services. The IUB will work with its equipment distribution program administrator, Telecommunications Access Iowa, and the Iowa Department for the Blind to assist eligible Iowans in obtaining and learning to use the specialized CPE they need to access the telephone system and Internet.

Iowans who are deaf-blind and wish to apply for help purchasing specialized CPE may contact Renee Toombs of Telecommunications Access Iowa at (800) 606-5099 or by email at TeleIowa@aol.com, Betty Hansen of the Iowa Department for the Blind at (515) 281-1259 or by email at Betty.Hansen@blind.state.ia.us, or Joni Nicoll of the IUB at (515) 725-7340 or by email at Joni.Nicoll@iub.iowa.gov.

###

The Iowa Utilities Board regulates utilities to ensure that reasonably priced, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe utility services are available to all Iowans.