



**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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**DONATE CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS**

PIERRE, S.D. – More than 150,000 troops are serving overseas, away from their families, and you can help them keep in contact with each other.

The South Dakota Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, along with Cell Phones for Soldiers, are calling on Americans to support those brave men and women by donating unused cell phones.

Cell Phones for Soldiers hopes to collect more than one million cell phones this year to help keep troops connected with their families.

“Over the past few years, we have been amazed by the generosity of others. But we have also seen the continued need to support our troops,” says Brittany Bergquist, Cell Phones for Soldiers co-founder. “It is easy for Americans to make a small sacrifice of support by donating unused cell phones and providing families with a much-needed connection to their loved ones overseas.”

People can support the collection drive by donating cell phones at either campus of the VA Black Hills Health Care System or the Black Hills CBOC:

- Fort Meade VAMC, Building 133 Waiting Room, 113 Comanche Road, Fort Meade, SD (800) 743-1070
- Hot Springs VAMC, Emergency Room Waiting Area, 500 North 5th Street, Hot Springs, SD (800) 764-5370
- Black Hills CBOC, Waiting Room, 3625 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Rapid City, SD (605) 718-1095

“We’re proud to show our support for U.S. soldiers and to contribute to a worthy cause like Cell Phones for Soliders,” says Charles Claussen, Veterans Division Director.

Cell Phones for Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist of Norwell, Mass., with \$21 of their own money. Since then, the registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization has raised millions of dollars in donations and distributed millions of prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas.

“We are continuously overwhelmed by the enthusiastic support of thousands of Americans who have helped our troops speak with their loved ones,” says the teens’ father, Bob Bergquist. “However, the need for support keeps growing as more troops are sent to the Middle East or are asked to serve extended tours of duty.”

Through increased fundraising efforts, the Bergquist family hopes to raise more than \$10 million in the next five years for new programs to allow troops abroad to see their families on a regular basis.

Donated cell phones are sent to ReCellular, which pays Cell Phones for Soldiers for each phone. The money is then used to purchase prepaid calling cards that are sent to troops.

About half of the phones ReCellular processes are reconditioned and resold to wholesale companies in more than 40 countries. Phones and components that cannot be refurbished are dismantled and recycled