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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *National conference unites vision rehab professionals*

BIRMINGHAM – Experts and professionals from around the nation who work in the field of blindness, low vision, and related fields will gather in the Magic City on Aug. 8-10 to celebrate the past, present, and future of vision rehabilitation therapy.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) will serve as the hosting agency for the 2016 Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (AVRT) Conference.

The three-day professional development conference brings together more than 140 vision rehabilitation professionals from 19 states, Puerto Rico, and St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, for a state-of-the-art training that emphasizes job readiness and education for persons with vision loss, said Lenore Dillon, ADRS coordinator of vision rehabilitation therapists and orientation and mobility specialists.

“This conference seeks to celebrate the ‘magic’ of vision rehabilitation therapy,” said Dillon, who is also the AVRT conference chair. “In 1946, we held our first professional conference in Chicago. Over the past 70 years, vision rehabilitation has witnessed ‘magical’ results through advances in technology and teaching methods that have transformed the field. This year, we’ll look back on our many triumphs to better understand where our profession is heading in the future.”

The conference will feature more than 20 sessions on an array of topics, including updates to Unified English Braille (UEB), best practices in serving older blind adults, promoting community mobility and social participation, developing vocational skills, and the latest advances in assistive technology.

“The conference is important because it allows for collaboration and camaraderie,” said Dillon. “Our field is highly specialized, and we are scattered all over the country. Getting to know other VRTs helps us learn from one another. This training will allow us all to do a better job in our respective areas.”

The opening ceremony for the conference will be at 10 a.m. at the Birmingham DoubleTree Hotel, 808 20th St. South.

In addition to ADRS, the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) is also serving as a conference sponsor. AIDB will provide interpreting services for all training sessions, Dillon said.

The Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, previously the Mid-America Conference of Rehabilitation Teachers, is the professional organization for vision rehabilitation therapists providing services to persons with blindness or low vision across the country. Vision rehabilitation therapy helps teach adaptive independent living skills to enable adults who are blind or have low vision to perform a wide range of daily activities.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

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PROVIDING SERVICES TO ALABAMIANS WITH DISABILITIES