



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## Senator Amedore and AT&T Kickoff Holiday Cell Phones For Soldiers Collection Drive

GEORGE AMEDORE December 5, 2019



Tis the season to be giving and in that spirit, Senator George Amedore and AT&T today announced a month long partnership with the nonprofit Cell Phones For Soldiers and asked residents throughout the 46th Senate District to help troops call home by donating old and unneeded mobile devices and tablets.

For every donated phone valued at \$5, Cell Phones For Soldiers is able to provide 2 ½ hours of free talk time to deployed troops via calling cards. All proceeds from the recycled devices

will be used to buy long distance calling cards for troops at home and abroad. As many as 200,000 troops are serving in the U.S. military around the world and by donating to Cell Phones For Soldiers, local residents and businesses can provide a valuable lifeline for America's bravest men and women to connect with loved ones back home.

The holiday mobile device collection drive starts today and runs through the end of December. The public and businesses can drop off gently used and unwanted cell phones and/or tablets at collection bins in AT&T stores throughout the region and at several public locations throughout the senator's district

### **Montgomery County**

Montgomery County DMV, 64 Broadway, Fonda  
Canajoharie Public Library, 2 Erie Blvd, Canajoharie  
Amsterdam Free Library, 28 Church Street, Amsterdam  
AT&T Store, 116 Sanford Farms Shopping Center, Amsterdam

### **Schenectady County**

Duanesburg Town Hall, 5853 Western Turnpike, Duanesburg  
Princetown Town Hall, 165 Princetown Plaza, Princetown  
Rotterdam Public Library, 1100 North Westcott Road, Rotterdam  
AT&T Store, 404 Balltown Road, Schenectady

### **Albany County**

Guilderland Public Library, 2228 Western Avenue, Guilderland  
Altamont Free Library, 179 Main St, Altamont  
Ravena Public Library, 95 Main Street, Ravena

AT&T Store, Crossgates Mall

### **Greene County**

New Baltimore Town Hall, 3809 County Route 51, Hannacroix

Greene County Veterans Services, 159 Jefferson Heights, Catskill

Cairo Public Library, 512 Main Street, Cairo

Windham Public Library, 5379 Route 23, Windham

AT&T Store, 90 Catskill Commons, Catskill

### **Ulster County**

Saugerties Town Hall, 4 High Street, Saugerties

Lloyd Town Hall, 12 Church Street, Highland

Town of Ulster Town Hall, One Town Hall Drive, Lake Katrine

AT&T Store, 1137 Ulster Ave, Kingston

“Our military men and women sacrifice so much on our behalf, and this is one small way we can give back to those who wear our nation’s uniform and serve our nation,” said Senator George Amedore, who serves on the Senate Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs. “The holiday time can be an especially difficult time for our armed forces, and I am honored to partner with AT&T and Cell Phones for Soldiers to sponsor this donation drive to help our heroes stay connected to family and loved ones back home. It’s a small gesture that makes a huge difference to our military men and women.”

Cell Phones For Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist at the ages of 12 and 13. The charity has since provided more than 300 million minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world through its calling card

program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of cellular phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards.

On average, Cell Phones For Soldiers distributes 1,500 calling cards each week to bases around the world, care package programs, deployment ceremonies and VA hospitals. Since 2004, Cell Phones For Soldiers has provided U.S. troops with more than 300 million “Minutes That Matter” and distributed more than 5 million prepaid international calling cards and have recycled more than 15 million mobile devices, reducing the impact on landfills. Approximately half of the phones processed are reconditioned and reused, while the those that can't be are dismantled for to reclaim materials and the funds raised from this process are used to purchase calling cards.

“For more than a century, AT&T has been dedicated to supporting our veterans, active military personnel and their families through various company initiatives,” AT&T New York President Amy Kramer said. “We are honored to collaborate with Senator Amedore and Cell Phones For Soldiers to encourage the community to join us and donate their used mobile devices and tablets to help the brave men and women who are deployed to protect and serve our country stay connected to their friends, family and loved ones at home, especially during the holiday season.”

“Each year we have been humbled by the amount of people and organizations like AT&T and community leaders like Senator Amedore that take the initiative to support our military members and veterans,” said Cell Phones For Soldiers co-founder Robbie Bergquist. “The communication gap between military members actively serving and their families is a crucial need that Cell Phones For Soldiers is committed to addressing for years to come. As a charity, we rely on partnerships like these to continue our mission to connect our military members

with their families while serving abroad.”

“As a veteran, I know firsthand how important it is to speak to your loved ones while on deployment. For soldiers, the stress of living in constant danger is compounded by the added burden of separation from your family,” said Retired Army Sergeant First Class Patrick J. Abrams. “Being able to call home and talk to them has long-lasting benefits for both the soldier and his/her family. I want to thank AT&T, Cell Phones for Soldiers, and Senator Amedore for their continued efforts to support service members and their families throughout deployments and for providing the opportunity to call home when it is needed most.”

“This time of year is especially difficult for our military, and it's so important to support our boots on the ground overseas. I am so excited to be part of this initiative to help our soldiers stay connected,” said Tiffany Orner, Air Force Veteran, and the Business Development Manager at JDog Junk Removal and Hauling, a military veterans partner.

For more information on Cell Phones For Soldiers, please visit [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com).

\*\*\*To prepare your mobile phone for donation here are some tips on how to erase all personal information that may be stored on it to protect your privacy:

- Remove your phone's SIM card Erase your address book, photos, messages and other stored information.
- Restore the device factory settings on your device.
- For instructions on how to do this, go to owner's manual or to the manufacturers' web site.

For more than a century, AT&T has been proudly supporting veterans, active military personnel and their families through numerous company initiatives. The company seeks to support military members and veterans at home as well as abroad. Multiple company initiatives focus on helping military members transition to the civilian workforce. AT&T is committed to hiring 20,000 veterans by the end of 2020, with more than 1,600 already hired across the country since 2013.

Over the past 5 years, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation contributed or directed more than \$21 million to organizations and projects that support military, veterans and their families through corporate, social investment and AT&T Foundation giving programs. As part of the company's Thank Our Heroes campaign, AT&T has teamed up with 16 organizations across the U.S. to recognize our nation's heroes and serve active duty military personnel, veterans and their families. This was part of a \$500,000 total contribution. In addition to making a monetary contribution, last year alone, AT&T has contributed over 40,000 volunteer hours to hundreds of veteran-focused events and programs. Since 2007, AT&T and its customers have donated more than \$64.5 million and distributed more than 600,000 pre-paid calling cards to service men and women.