SRT's First 75 Years: A History of Innovation

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SRT started in a place, but it began with people. In 1950, this vast stretch of North Dakota prairie had farms, schools, county seats, but no phones. Concerned citizens decided that the people who live here need phones. Farmers need to call into town; relatives and friends need to call each other. Phones were about safety, so people could help each other; about prosperity, so people could do business and earn a living; and about staying in touch with loved ones. You could say the mission has always been what life is all about: People coming together and forming community.

It was a bold idea and an even bolder action. When these determined people saw a need that lives depend on and then made it happen — that was the beginning of SRT's History of Innovation. In 1950, the Verendrye Electric Cooperative set out to start a telephone cooperative. In 1951, SRT came to be.

The story of SRT can't be told without the seventh Cooperative Principle: Concern for Community. Concern for fellow North Dakotans compelled SRT's founders to deliver the revolutionary service of human voices traveling over wires. It's a story of persistence among individuals and compassion among neighbors.

When we think of innovation, we often think of inventions that modernize daily life. But the real innovation behind SRT's history is the North Dakota spirit of its people, then and now.