

1                                   BEFORE THE  
2                                   FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

3                   In the Matter of:

4   DOCKET NO. 140029-TP  
5           REQUEST FOR SUBMISSION OF  
6           PROPOSALS FOR RELAY SERVICE,  
7           BEGINNING IN JUNE 2015, FOR  
8           THE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, DEAF/  
9           BLIND, OR SPEECH IMPAIRED, AND  
10          OTHER IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS IN  
11          COMPLIANCE WITH THE FLORIDA  
12          TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS SYSTEM  
13          ACT OF 1991.  
14          -----/

15                   PROCEEDINGS:                    Telecommunications Access System Act  
16   Advisory Committee Meeting

17                   TAKEN AT THE  
18                   INSTANCE OF:                    The Staff of the Florida  
19   Public Service Commission

20                   DATE:                                   Thursday, October 20, 2016

21                   TIME:                                   Commenced at 1:30 p.m.  
22   Concluded at 3:37 p.m.

23                   PLACE:                                   Gerald L. Gunter Building  
24   Room 105  
25   2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
   Tallahassee, Florida

                  REPORTED BY:                   LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR  
   Official FPSC Reporter  
   (850) 413-6734

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APPEARANCES:

CURTIS WILLIAMS, PSC Staff  
JEFF BATES, PSC Staff  
PAMELA PAGE, PSC Staff  
BETH SALAK, PSC Staff  
JAMES FORSTALL, FTRI  
CHRIS LITTLEWOOD, Florida Coordinating Council for  
the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Association  
for Late-Deafened Adults  
JEFF BRANCH, Sprint Relay  
TIMOTHY WATA, Florida Association of the Deaf  
MARYROSE SIRIANNI, AT&T Florida

TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES:

TOM D'ANGELO, Florida Association of the Deaf  
CHERYL RHODES, Florida Deaf/Blind Association

## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Good afternoon, everyone. I'm  
3 Curtis Williams with the Office of Telecommunications,  
4 and I'll be chairing today's meeting. For everyone  
5 online, we were just setting up some specifics on where  
6 the interpreters were going to set up for here in the  
7 room. So we've got that all straightened out, so we're  
8 ready to go ahead and get started.

9           Joining me is Jeff Bates, who is also with the  
10 Office of Telecommunications, and Pam Page with the  
11 Office of General Counsel.

12           Everyone should have received a copy of the  
13 meeting agenda, so we'll just proceed with the agenda as  
14 printed.

15           The first thing we would like to do is have  
16 our attorney, Pam Page, read the notice.

17           **MS. PAGE:** Pursuant to notice issued, this  
18 time, date, and place were set for this meeting of the  
19 Telecommunications Access System Act Advisory Committee  
20 in Docket No. 140029-TP.

21           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Ms. Page.

22           Before we proceed, I would like to just go  
23 over a few preliminary matters. A transcript will be  
24 made of today's meeting and provided to all TASA  
25 Committee members.

1           Also, please state your name when speaking for  
2 the record for our court reporter, and please also  
3 silence all cell phones during today's meeting.

4           For those who are participating by phone, we  
5 ask that you please put your phone on mute until you're  
6 ready to speak so we don't get interference. So far so  
7 good, so please keep them on mute if you're not  
8 speaking.

9           At this time, we'd like to go ahead and take  
10 appearances for everyone who is here with us in the  
11 conference room. We can start to my immediate right and  
12 just go around the room. So we can start with you,  
13 Mr. Forstall.

14           **MR. FORSTALL:** My name is James Forstall. I'm  
15 the executive director of Florida Telecommunications  
16 Relay, Incorporated.

17           **MR. WATA:** This is Timothy Wata, FAD  
18 representative.

19           **MR. BRANCH:** This is Jeff Branch, account  
20 executive for Sprint.

21           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Good afternoon. This is  
22 Chris Littlewood. I represent the Association for  
23 Late-Deafened Adults and also the Florida Coordinating  
24 Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I'm here  
25 through my employer, St. Petersburg College. I'm glad

1 to see everyone.

2 **MS. SIRIANNI:** Maryrose Sirianni, AT&T.

3 **MR. BATES:** Jeff Bates, telecommunications  
4 staff.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you.

6 For the individuals who are participating on  
7 the phone, we would like to ask you to please state your  
8 name and who you're representing. So feel free to jump  
9 in.

10 **MS. RHODES:** Cheryl Rhodes, and I represent  
11 Florida Deaf/Blind Association.

12 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Cheryl.

13 **MR. D'ANGELO:** And this is Tom. Hello,  
14 everyone. Tom D'Angelo, and I represent the Florida  
15 Association for the Deaf, FAD.

16 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Tom.

17 Do we have anyone else participating by phone?  
18 Hearing none at this time, if there are --

19 **MS. RHODES:** This is Cheryl speaking, and I  
20 just have a question.

21 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes.

22 **MS. RHODES:** Tom, who represented FAD, what's  
23 Tom's last name, please?

24 **MR. WILLIAMS:** D'Angelo.

25 **MS. RHODES:** Thank you.

1           **MR. WILLIAMS:** You're welcome.

2           Those are all the preliminary matters that we  
3 have at this time. I'll just ask if there are any other  
4 preliminary matters that anyone would like to bring up  
5 procedurally in terms of how we're going to proceed. If  
6 not, as I indicated, we'll proceed according to the  
7 agenda.

8           Yes, Chris.

9           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I just have a quick meeting  
10 question for those on the phone.

11           Everybody connected on the phone, are they  
12 connected to a Video Relay or is there a caption line  
13 that they can connect to?

14           **MR. WILLIAMS:** They're participating by phone,  
15 to my understanding.

16           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I understand it's by phone,  
17 but additionally people that are on the line that are  
18 deaf or hard of hearing, I'm asking what TRS service  
19 they're using or Video Relay Service they're using.

20           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Well, we can just let  
21 them speak.

22           **MR. D'ANGELO:** This is Tom. I'm using a Video  
23 Relay Service.

24           **MR. WILLIAMS:** And, Cheryl, would you like to  
25 share with us how you're participating in addition to --

1           **MS. RHODES:** VRS.

2           **MR. WILLIAMS:** VRS.

3           **MS. RHODES:** I'm sorry. This is Cheryl, and  
4 I'm speaking through VRS.

5           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Cheryl.

6           **MS. RHODES:** And speaking through an  
7 interpreter next to me as well.

8           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you.

9           Does that address your question, Chris?

10          **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Sort of. I'm just wondering  
11 if there's a caption line that's available for  
12 telecommunications. I cannot participate in this  
13 meeting without having a caption line available unless I  
14 come to this meeting. Because TRS, if I go through  
15 caption telephone service through CapTel, is generally  
16 too slow for me to connect.

17           So I'm just wondering if it's prearranged for  
18 a caption line, much like this is set up, before the  
19 meetings?

20          **MR. WILLIAMS:** That we actually set up? No,  
21 we have not.

22          **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Okay.

23          **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any other preliminary  
24 matters? If not, we can go ahead and get started with  
25 the presentations.

1           We'll start with the staff presentation.  
2           Mr. Jeff Bates will provide an FCC update at this time.

3           **MR. BATES:** Good afternoon. Jeff Bates,  
4           Office of Telecommunications.

5           I want to explain the FCC number versus the DA  
6           number on the orders.

7           Decisions are issued in two different ways:  
8           By the authority of the entire Commission with each  
9           Commissioner voting, or by authority delegated to the  
10          bureaus and offices of the Commission.

11          If the decision is decided by the Commission,  
12          it is identified by an FCC number. The FCC number is  
13          comprised of two digits indicating the year and a number  
14          of up to three digits indicating the sequence, such as  
15          FCC 08-138.

16          If the decision is issued through authority  
17          delegated to the FCC bureaus and offices, it is  
18          identified by a DA number. The DA number is constructed  
19          similarly to the FCC number with two initial digits  
20          indicating the year and a number of up to four digits  
21          indicating the sequence, such as DA 08-1476.

22          Order DA 16-750, which was released on  
23          June 30th, 2016, in this order the Consumer and  
24          Governmental Affairs Bureau adopted permanent  
25          compensation rates to be paid from the Interstate



1 Telecommunications Relay Services Fund, TRS Fund, for  
2 the year beginning July 1st, 2016, for all  
3 Telecommunications relay Services.

4 The order also determines the percentage  
5 factor used to calculate how much interstate and  
6 international revenue telecommunications carriers and  
7 other covered service providers must contribute to the  
8 TRS Fund.

9 Based on recommendations from Rolka Loube  
10 effective July 1, 2016, the permanent compensation rates  
11 for interstate and internet-based TRS other than Video  
12 Relay Service shall be: One, for interstate traditional  
13 TRS, \$2.63 rounded up. Two, for interstate  
14 Speech-to-Speech Relay Service, it will be \$3 and  
15 rounded up to 76 cents. And, three, for interstate  
16 captioned and internet protocol captioned telephone  
17 service, \$1.91 rounded up. For IP Relay, it'll be  
18 \$1.40.

19 In DA 16-810, comments requested -- comments  
20 were requested on the VTCSecure LLC petition for the  
21 waiver released July 18th, 2016.

22 The Wireline Competition and Consumer &  
23 Governmental Affairs Bureaus sought comments on  
24 VTCSecure LLC's petition for a waiver of Section  
25 64.613(a) (1) through (2) and 64.613(b) (2) and 64.623(c)

1 of the Commission's rules, and a declaratory ruling to  
2 permit providers of direct sign language customer  
3 support services to access the Telecommunications Relay  
4 Services Numbering Directory filed on July 6th, 2016.

5 Further notice of proposed agency -- proposed  
6 rulemaking in 16-893 was released August 4th, 2016. In  
7 2013, the FCC recommended its rules to -- amended its  
8 rules to improve the structure, efficiency, and quality  
9 of the Video Relay Service program, took steps to  
10 approve the effectiveness of its interoperability and  
11 portability rules in order to improve functional  
12 equivalents and VRS availability for consumers, ease of  
13 compliance by providers, and overall efficiency in the  
14 operation of the TRS program.

15 The Commission encouraged the continuation of  
16 efforts to develop voluntary consensus standards to  
17 facilitate interoperability and portability. The VRS  
18 Task Group of the SIP Forum and a successor group, the  
19 Relay User Equipment Forum, have produced standards  
20 believed to satisfy the Commission's objectives.

21 The further notice proposes to incorporate  
22 those standards by reference into the VRS  
23 interoperability rule, along with a process that will  
24 readily enable revisions to this rule to reflect future  
25 amendments or changes in the standards. The comment

1 period was for 21 days following publication in the  
2 National Register.

3 Order DA 16-963, released on August 24th,  
4 2016, the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau granted  
5 a request from Sprint and Hamilton Relay for temporary  
6 waivers of two mandatory minimum requirements that apply  
7 to the provision of traditional Telecommunications Relay  
8 Service, TRS; Speech-to-Speech Relay Service; and  
9 Caption Telephone Service.

10 Commission rules require TRS providers to  
11 allow users to have long distance calls carried by their  
12 preferred long distance carrier and offer the same  
13 billing options traditionally offered by wireline  
14 telephone companies.

15 These two requirements are temporarily waived  
16 for providers of traditional TRS, STS, and CTS to the  
17 extent that the providers do not assess a toll charge  
18 for long distance calls and will last for two years.

19 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Jeff.

20 At this time, I will give an overview of the  
21 major events here at the PSC. And for this year the  
22 Florida Public Service Commission, the Commission  
23 adopted, as always, adopted FTRI's fiscal year budget  
24 for the 2016/2017 fiscal year. On July 21st of this  
25 year, the PSC issued Order No. PSC-16-0280-PAA-TP in the

1 controlling docket for Relay, which is Docket No.  
2 140029-TP. In adopting FTRI's budget for the fiscal  
3 year, the PSC required the incumbent local exchange  
4 companies and competitive local exchange companies and  
5 shared tenant service providers to bill an 11-cent  
6 surcharge for the fiscal year effective September 1st,  
7 2016. The Commission also reduced FTRI's budget by  
8 \$305,386. That was the major event here at the  
9 Commission for this year.

10 At this time we'll proceed with FTRI's  
11 presentation.

12 **MR. FORSTALL:** I have one correction to the  
13 roster.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Yes.

15 **MR. FORSTALL:** Richard Herring, who represents  
16 Hearing Loss Association of Florida, is not the  
17 representative anymore.

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay.

19 **MR. FORSTALL:** And I believe Cynthia Moynihan,  
20 M-o-n-i-h-a-n (sic), is the new president of HLA  
21 Florida. She would be the person to contact. That's  
22 probably why we don't have a representative here at the  
23 meeting.

24 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. She has not contacted  
25 us, however. We haven't received any contact. But we

1 will reach out to them, but we have not officially  
2 gotten any, you know, request from them to make a  
3 change. So thank you for that, for pointing that out,  
4 James, and we will reach out to them going forward.

5 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Have the -- this is Chris  
6 Littlewood speaking.

7 Have the state organizations been made aware  
8 that there are vacancies through HLAA or other agencies  
9 or organizations throughout the state on this committee?

10 **MR. WILLIAMS:** We have not sent out a -- any  
11 type of information request from all the organizations.

12 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Okay. It was just my  
13 recollection at the last meeting that we had talked  
14 about doing that. So I just would hope that we could  
15 continue to get additional representation on this  
16 advisory board.

17 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. We'll make note of that,  
18 and that is a good idea. And we'll make note. And do  
19 you have any suggestions in terms of how?

20 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Hi. This is Tom here too. I  
21 have a question.

22 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay, Tom. Just one minute.  
23 We'll get with you. But what I wanted to do at this  
24 time was to ask Chris if he had any suggestions on  
25 contacting the organizations in terms of getting any

1 feedback from them on their desire to have  
2 representation on the TASA Advisory Committee.

3 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Well, I certainly have two  
4 suggestions, and they're what I gave at the last  
5 meeting.

6 One is through me. If you send me an email or  
7 contact, I can make sure that all of the state  
8 presidents of the HLA for the different chapters are  
9 notified: Sarasota HLA; Clearwater HLA; South Florida  
10 HLA; and the state president, who James just mentioned,  
11 Cynthia Moynihan. Also the program office for the  
12 Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of  
13 Hearing, through whom I'm representing here, the young  
14 lady's name that works in the program office for FCCDHH,  
15 Megan Callahan, at the Department of Health, she can  
16 help contact all the organizations. So it's one phone  
17 call or one email to her and she can pretty much get in  
18 touch with everybody throughout the state and all the  
19 organizations. So that would be a huge help to you  
20 where it's just one stop either through her or through  
21 me, and I'm happy to help with that.

22 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yeah. I mean, we can do --  
23 we'll coordinate with you directly. Just to make sure  
24 we understand, I know you said if we -- if you received  
25 an email, you would proceed in doing that.

1           You know, I would go ahead and just say that  
2 through this conversation you can -- you know, your  
3 support and help would be appreciated and you don't  
4 necessarily -- we'll send an email, but we don't  
5 necessarily need to send an email to get the process  
6 started.

7           We'll definitely coordinate with you and work  
8 with you in terms of getting the word out that we are  
9 constantly seeking representation on the TASA Advisory  
10 Committee.

11           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Okay.

12           **MR. D'ANGELO:** Hi, this is Tom here.

13           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, Tom, you had a question.

14           **MR. D'ANGELO:** And I'm not sure how I can ask  
15 this question, but I'm a little bit shocked to hear the  
16 news that FTRI's budget has been cut by 300,000. I'm  
17 like, wow, that sounds like a lot to me.

18           I see that coming with the phone distribution  
19 programs that are happening, but we haven't gotten any  
20 official final notification from TASA about the budget  
21 cut. This is the first time I've heard of it.

22           So I'm just wondering what -- if that's going  
23 to take effect September 1st, and how are we going to  
24 handle that? Maybe James is going to present on that  
25 later.

1           But I thought maybe if you could help me  
2 understand for the meeting the purpose, because, wow,  
3 that's a lot of money to be cut all the sudden.

4           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes. Thank you for the  
5 question and seeking clarification.

6           But as I indicated, it's -- it was a formal  
7 decision that was made by the Commission and it was  
8 through a Commission order. So that order has actually  
9 gone into effect. And FTRI and James, through his  
10 presentation, he can address some of the things that  
11 FTRI is doing on an operational standpoint going  
12 forward.

13           But as far as the actual establishing FTRI's  
14 fiscal year 2016/2017 budget, that decision had been --  
15 has been established, has been made.

16           **MR. D'ANGELO:** Okay. So that \$300,000, where  
17 is it going? I mean, I just want to make sure because,  
18 see, that seems to me that it was -- should be for deaf  
19 and hard of hearing services throughout the state of  
20 Florida. Is that where it's going to go?

21           **MR. WILLIAMS:** It's actually -- if I  
22 understand your question correctly, that amount is  
23 FTRI's -- it's their discretion to, on a going-forward  
24 basis from an operational standpoint, to determine how  
25 they're going to operate their program within the



1 approved budget established by the Florida Public  
2 Service Commission.

3 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Okay. Well, I guess I'll wait  
4 to hear from James later what the plan is. Thank you.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you. If there are no  
6 other questions then, we can go ahead and start with  
7 James' presentation.

8 **MR. FORSTALL:** I hope y'all can hear me  
9 clearly.

10 Thank you, Curtis, and good afternoon,  
11 everyone.

12 The report that I will be presenting on has to  
13 do with the annual report that shows the result of our  
14 program services for fiscal year 2015 and '16. And I  
15 will be happy to touch on Tom's question at the end of  
16 the presentation and answer any other questions.

17 The first slide is the client services. The  
18 total number of equipment distribution services provided  
19 by FTRI during fiscal year 2015 and 2016 was 28,919  
20 services.

21 As you can see through the pie chart, that  
22 43 percent of it, 43.6 percent of it was new services.  
23 37.1 were exchanges. Exchanges are when an individual  
24 has a particular product or a device from FTRI and for  
25 some reason it is not working, it is defective, and we

1 exchange it for the same type of phone. And that can be  
2 any particular device they have.

3 And what happens with that exchange is we may  
4 have clients that have had a phone for a long period of  
5 time. I mean, it could be ten years, 12 years, whatever  
6 the case may be, and the phone is just not working  
7 anymore. So, therefore, they will come back, and  
8 depending on what that product is or that phone is, it's  
9 very possible that we no longer carry that phone in the  
10 program because it's no longer produced. So we do allow  
11 them the opportunity to select from other devices that  
12 we do have in the program. So that explains the  
13 exchanges.

14 The modified represents an individual who may  
15 have an amplified phone, for instance, and maybe over  
16 time their hearing has progressively gotten worse and  
17 they can no longer hear on the amplified phone. So they  
18 may modify to a CapTel, so to speak.

19 So when we do a modification, more time is  
20 required for that service, so we do pay more for that  
21 service because more time is required. However, we  
22 don't see a whole lot of the modifieds.

23 And, of course, returns are for people who  
24 return the equipment for whatever reason. A family  
25 member may return it because the individual may have

1 deceased, passed on, moved out of state, whatever the  
2 case may be.

3 And a follow-up service is if an individual  
4 goes into a center to get service and they go home, they  
5 get trained on the equipment, they'll go home and maybe  
6 a month or two later they may not quite remember how to  
7 operate a particular feature on the product, and they  
8 may go to a center or contact a center to get more  
9 follow-up services such as additional training. And so  
10 we consider that a follow-up service.

11 Total client services. Again, over the last  
12 three years, you'll see that we have -- experience has  
13 declined, and we have had a decline from 2015/'16 to  
14 2014/'15 of a little over 6 percent of total services.

15 New client services. FTRI served 12,620 new  
16 clients during the reporting period. Clients certified  
17 as eligible for the FTRI program are classified into  
18 four different groups: We have deaf, hard of hearing,  
19 speech impaired, and dual sensory impaired. And as you  
20 can see, the majority of the individuals that qualify  
21 for the program are hard of hearing.

22 And the next slide shows the new client  
23 services for the past three years. And, again, we have  
24 a decline in the number of new clients over prior years,  
25 and that decrease is 5.8 percent.

1           And also during the fiscal year 2015/'16 we  
2 had three regional distribution centers close throughout  
3 the state for various reasons, so that did impact our  
4 numbers. And it will continue to impact our numbers  
5 until we are able to find a solution for those areas.

6           Okay. The next slide is distributed  
7 equipment. FTRI distributes both new and refurbished  
8 equipment. Equipment distributed during fiscal year  
9 2015/'16 numbered 23,876 units. And 96 percent of the  
10 equipment distributed are what we call volume control  
11 phones for the hard of hearing, and those are the  
12 amplified telephones, of course. They are the majority  
13 of the equipment that we do distribute.

14           And we have a variety of those phones. We  
15 have those with cordless phones, corded phones, we have  
16 caller ID, non-caller ID, et cetera. So we have a good  
17 selection of amplified phones.

18           Okay. The total number of equipment that was  
19 distributed again is 23,876. And, again, this is going  
20 to show you the past three years. The graph shows a  
21 decline in the number of equipment distributed, and that  
22 all contributed to the low number of clients or the  
23 decreasing number of clients that we have been serving.  
24 And primarily -- and it is the same. The reasons are  
25 the same. They haven't changed for the last few years.

1 As more and more people are migrating over to different  
2 technology, FTRI is still operating under the 1991 law  
3 that only allows us to distribute pieces of equipment.  
4 It is the belief of FTRI staff that should we be allowed  
5 to distribute other technology, we would expect to see  
6 these numbers increase.

7 The next slide is -- talks about outreach.  
8 FTRI conducted 1,877 outreach activities during the last  
9 fiscal year. 1,282 of them were off-site distribution.

10 The dual event, which means it can be anywhere  
11 from a presentation/equipment distribution or an exhibit  
12 equipment distribution.

13 FTRI has -- the last couple of years we've  
14 made a change in our outreach procedures to make sure  
15 that we do serve clients while they're in the facility  
16 listening to our presentation or exhibit. So we have  
17 arranged for the centers to work with the facilities  
18 that are actually presenting that or exhibiting in to  
19 secure a private room whereby they can take the  
20 individuals in and provide the equipment and training  
21 while they are there.

22 We have learned over the years that we would  
23 go to a presentation, the centers would go to a  
24 presentation and, you know, we would say, "Okay. If you  
25 need a phone, you would like to have a phone, please

1       come to our office located so and so." And what we're  
2       finding is that not everybody goes. Although you might  
3       have more people in the room during the presentation  
4       that would qualify for the product or the services, but  
5       they don't necessarily end up going to a center.

6               So we made a change in the procedure to allow  
7       for the RDC to distribute the phone on the spot, and we  
8       have found that to be a good and positive change to the  
9       program.

10              SP stands for service providers. That is when  
11       a center will go and work with an individual who is  
12       authorized by TASA to certify our application. And they  
13       can be a hearing aid specialist, audiologist, medical  
14       doctor, and there are eight different categories for  
15       individuals to certify our application.

16              And so we encourage the RDCs, which are called  
17       regional distribution centers, to visit with local  
18       service providers to set up a working relationship with  
19       them to establish a referral opportunity. So last year,  
20       21 service providers were visited by the RDCs.

21              The BPP represents the Business Partnership  
22       Program. We've had four businesses sign up with FTRI to  
23       introduce the Florida Relay program to their employees.

24              And just to remind you that years ago FTRI  
25       partnered with Publix, who had taken our material

1 regarding the Relay service, Florida Relay service, as  
2 well as information and material about hearing loss and  
3 incorporated it into their employee manual, and they  
4 were excited about doing that with us and have worked  
5 and they continue to work with us in that area.

6 If you ever go to a Publix, you can look on  
7 the sliding door when you walk in and you will see the  
8 Florida Relay logo on the door. So I encourage you to  
9 look for it the next time you go to Publix.

10 The next slide is the total outreach  
11 distribution. As you can see, that is also on the  
12 decline. We had less activities performed last year and  
13 so we -- that will continue, and that's primarily due to  
14 a shortage of funding. And so with the limited funding  
15 that we have for outreach, we will probably most likely  
16 see a decline in outreach continue going forward.

17 Some of the other services provided through  
18 the FTRI administrative office, during the last fiscal  
19 year, we processed 27,751 customer service calls. We  
20 received over 3,452 online inquiries through the FTRI  
21 website.

22 Over the last few years, when we introduce --  
23 as we progressed and we made changes to the website, we  
24 did allow for people to request for an application  
25 through the website, and we have seen a tremendous

1 increase with that. And we attribute that to the insert  
2 ads that we're advertising in the newspaper because we  
3 do list that web address there. So when people go  
4 online to fill in the information -- and we only -- we  
5 don't require that they fill out an application online.  
6 We just get their information so that we can reach back  
7 out to them with an application, or we may follow up  
8 with a phone call or an email, different ways that we  
9 can follow up with individuals to let them know that  
10 there is a center in their area. If they choose to --  
11 want to go to the center that's nearby, they can do  
12 that.

13 And when we get that information into our  
14 system, we call it AR, which is an application request,  
15 and we will forward that information to the local center  
16 if the client is in the area. And that information is  
17 already in our database, so we have a name, address,  
18 phone number, email, whatever information, and how they  
19 heard about the program. So we are capturing that  
20 information upfront.

21 And so when they go into a center, all the  
22 regional distribution center staff person needs to do is  
23 put in the client's name in a search and it will show  
24 up. And if they see the client in the AR field feature  
25 of our database, all they have to do is create -- hit a



1 button that says, "Create client," and it will  
2 automatically take all this information from that AR and  
3 move it into the database where they get the service and  
4 equipment. So half the process is completed through  
5 that method.

6 And we also allow the centers that when they  
7 get calls for an ad or for anything, they can also use  
8 that AR feature. What that allows us to do is to do a  
9 much better job of tracking how people heard about the  
10 program.

11 Even if they saw the ad and they call us, and  
12 they may not remember exactly that they -- you know, if  
13 they have a phone, if they are a current client of FTRI  
14 and they see the ad, they'll call. And we can look up  
15 and say, "You know, you already have a phone, so you're  
16 good to go." And they may say, "Oh, I don't remember,  
17 but thank you anyway." Or if you have a problem with  
18 your phone, we'll follow up with them and make sure that  
19 we troubleshoot their phone or replace it, if necessary.  
20 But we are still tracking those calls because we want to  
21 demonstrate that the ads are working.

22 The other part of the services that we  
23 provide, we processed more than 87,906 equipment  
24 distribution program forms, and we provided 693 hours of  
25 training and support services to the RDCs.

1           Other important facts. Excuse me. We  
2 continue to place a high priority on protecting the  
3 integrity of client information by making security  
4 enhancements to the system. We operated within budget  
5 requirements and we received high marks from external  
6 auditors for financial records and internal controls.

7           The next slide shows the core expenditures per  
8 service provided during fiscal year -- from 2010 to  
9 2016. And you will see this past year the overall cost  
10 per service has decreased from prior years, and you will  
11 see that the last years we had pretty much of a  
12 continued decline except for one year we went up a  
13 little bit, but we went back down this year. So that's  
14 important information to keep in mind because when you  
15 do -- when we do compare services, we need to keep in  
16 mind that we want to make sure that we include all  
17 services that we're providing simply using the overall  
18 budget. That's how we decided to come up with this  
19 number, so we wanted to make sure it was a good  
20 representation of that.

21           The next slide shows the newspaper ads that we  
22 have. We published in the newspaper during the last  
23 fiscal year. The blue one, the one you're looking at  
24 right now which has the blue color background, those  
25 will run in the fall of 2015. And then the next one is

1 the red color ad which we ran in the spring, and we mix  
2 it up. And as you might recall, at the last TASA  
3 meeting I reported on the difference in how the fall and  
4 the spring ads, they really made a big difference in the  
5 number of clients served. And we believe that the red  
6 ad, the color red ad produces a much, much better  
7 result. And we are still using the same ad today;  
8 however, our plan is in January to freshen it up, make  
9 it look a little bit different.

10 And we will continue to run the ad, the insert  
11 ad. The insert ads are producing good results, and I  
12 have some of that information for you to see. We'll get  
13 to that in a minute.

14 The next slide I have is the CapTel insert ad.  
15 We did do a run with the CapTel ad working with Sprint.  
16 We did it in a trial area. We did it in two particular  
17 RDCs, and the results were pretty good. But we did  
18 do -- I just wanted to point out that we did do some  
19 CapTel insert ads.

20 The banner ads, we also continue to place  
21 banner ads on different websites. We have a vendor that  
22 we work with that produces the banner ads for us. And  
23 if you look at the last banner on there, it is for the  
24 Florida Academy of Audiologists, and they have -- you  
25 can barely see it, but if you look at that banner ad

1 right in the middle of it, you'll see our phone number.  
2 And if you click on that, it will take them to our  
3 website, a landing page that we have established and  
4 built in partnership with Florida Academy of  
5 Audiologists.

6 We have several partners that we're working  
7 with, and what we're trying to do is drive the  
8 audiologist to that landing page so they can complete  
9 the referral request for a client and we will get that  
10 in our system. Because we have found that -- during my  
11 summer travels and meeting with some -- at some of the  
12 conferences meeting with hearing aid specialists and  
13 audiologists, they're saying that they sign off on a lot  
14 of applications.

15 But when I -- and we had what we call a  
16 service provider ID number for each of the service  
17 providers that certify our site applications so we're  
18 able to track and see how many of them are being  
19 referred by a particular provider. So we can work them  
20 to improve or thank them, whatever the case may be.

21 And in talking with a few, they say, "Well, we  
22 saw an application. We refer them to you all the time."  
23 And when I pulled up the numbers, they were shocked to  
24 see how low they were. And I said, "Well, that could be  
25 for a different reason." It could be that the client

1 leaves with an application. It maybe never made it to  
2 the center for whatever reason it may be.

3 So now, by entering it into our database,  
4 online application referral request, we have the  
5 information. And then that way when we refer them to a  
6 local center, then we can set up the contact and  
7 appointment to make sure the client gets served. So  
8 we're excited about that process. And most -- every one  
9 of these service providers I spoke with welcomed that  
10 opportunity. Hopefully that will cut down on the cost  
11 of our paper application and it'll save time, and at  
12 least we're going to make sure the client gets the  
13 equipment and the services. So we're excited about  
14 that.

15 Facebook ads, we continue to do ads on  
16 Facebook, also Twitter and Facebook memes. This is just  
17 a few of them, but we send out a new meme on Facebook  
18 and Twitter at least once a week, sometimes twice a  
19 week. And this is all funded through one of our vendors  
20 in partnership, so we don't have to pay for this. But  
21 the memes have been really, really attractive. We do  
22 get a good response from the audience as far as visiting  
23 and viewing the meme. So we know that's working.

24 The next slide talks about quality assurance.  
25 FTRI maintains a quality assurance system to monitor the

1 services, training, and equipment provided by the  
2 contracted agencies. Postcard questionnaires are mailed  
3 to a random selection of clients served by each regional  
4 distribution center or the FTRI office. Last year,  
5 4,336 questionnaires, postcard questionnaires were  
6 mailed during this fiscal year, and we received -- FTRI  
7 received 1,227 responses for a nearly 28 percent return  
8 rate, and 94 percent of the responses were positive.

9 All the negative responses are resolved by  
10 either contacting the client directly by our office or  
11 referring them to the local RDC to follow up.

12 And we also have a quality assurance system on  
13 our website, and it is an automated email system that we  
14 set up to send the quality assurance survey to  
15 individuals that receive a service. And how this works  
16 is if a client receives a service today, tomorrow  
17 morning by 9:00 they will get an email survey from FTRI.  
18 And when they respond, we get that information back.  
19 And then 30 days from that date of service they will get  
20 a follow-up email to ask them how they like the  
21 equipment. So the first one is on services, and the  
22 second follow-up is on equipment.

23 And the service -- okay. The quality  
24 assurance survey, the email system sent out 4,360 to new  
25 clients, and we received 1,239 responses, for a

1 28.42 percent response rate, which is good. And  
2 requests -- any clients requesting follow-up were  
3 contacted by FTRI customer care.

4 We do -- one of the questions in the survey,  
5 in the electronic survey is, "Should you wish FTRI to  
6 follow up with you, how would you like for it to follow  
7 up, phone call or email?" And most of them will say,  
8 "Email," or say, you know, nothing, "We don't need you,"  
9 or they leave it blank. It depends. If somebody has a  
10 question or they want further information, then they'll  
11 put that information in there. So we do like that.

12 And what happens with the survey, the  
13 response, the way we have it set up in our system, any  
14 particular client that responds to the survey, for  
15 instance, RDC No. 10, which is located in New Port  
16 Richey, any client that responded to a survey from that  
17 particular center, even though the survey comes from our  
18 office, it is assigned an RDC number so we know who  
19 provided the service. And when they respond, that  
20 particular response will show up on the RDC's website in  
21 our system or their page so they can see the responses  
22 from the client from their own staff.

23 Each RDC has their own separate page on our  
24 website. So when you log -- when an individual center  
25 logs in, they're only seeing information pertaining to

1 that particular center. They do not see anybody else's.  
2 However, at FTRI internally we get to see the whole  
3 picture. So that works real well.

4 And we also, through that same method, the AR  
5 request I was referring to, we have a section on our --  
6 what we call a dashboard, and we have sections on it  
7 that in a snapshot you can see what's going on real  
8 quick. By the way, our database is live, so they can  
9 actually see how many new clients are being served  
10 today. And so that's interactive all the time.

11 And so with the AR request, if we -- when we  
12 assign it to that particular center, it will show up on  
13 their dashboard under follow-up, which tells them you  
14 need to follow up with this client after so many days.  
15 It will automatically show up on the dashboard. And we  
16 have reports that tells us whether they followed up with  
17 them or not. And if they don't, after ten days, after  
18 ten business days or ten calendar days, I can't remember  
19 which, but after ten days it will automatically get  
20 kicked back to FTRI that there is no activity on that  
21 client so that we can follow up with the client and  
22 we'll provide the service.

23 So we want to make sure -- we're doing  
24 everything we can to make sure that we're not losing a  
25 client and we're following up with them to make sure



1 they get services or get some type of service or  
2 equipment from us. So we're doing all that.

3 Okay. The next slide is the National  
4 Deaf/Blind Equipment Distribution Program or the  
5 iCanConnect. As you know, as of June 30th, 2016, FTRI  
6 relinquished its certification to the FCC, and the Helen  
7 Keller National Center is currently certificated to  
8 serve the Florida area, although in 2015 and '16, FTRI  
9 served 17 new clients, we served 42 assisting clients,  
10 and we distributed 98 pieces of equipment.

11 The next slide shows a map with all the  
12 different distribution centers, the location and the  
13 name of the agency. Right now we have a total of 20 --  
14 what happened to it -- oh, there you are. Thank you.

15 We have 23 different centers. And since  
16 July 1st of 2015, as I said earlier, three regional  
17 distribution centers have ceased contracting with FTRI.  
18 And they were the Deaf and Hearing Resource Center --  
19 Resources of West Palm Beach; the CIL of South Florida,  
20 which is out of Miami; and the Community Center for Deaf  
21 and Hard of Hearing of Sarasota and Bradenton.  
22 Currently we do have a center in West Palm Beach. We do  
23 have a center in Miami, and we are working right now  
24 with a local agency in Sarasota to reestablish a center  
25 there.

1           The next slide is an outreach update, just to  
2 give you a little bit of information about where we are  
3 to date. And we -- these are the insert ads that we're  
4 advertising, as I pointed out earlier. We're still  
5 using the same insert ad that was in the red color. And  
6 these are the numbers that reflect what's gone on from  
7 July 1st to October 11th.

8           And you can see the average cost per service  
9 is \$77.41, and the overall cost per contact -- and what  
10 I mean by that is average cost per contact is any time  
11 somebody contacts FTRI because they saw the ad, we're  
12 tracking that.

13           Of the -- I'm sorry. I have to look at your  
14 numbers. Mine are too small.

15           Of the 2,185 -- thank you -- 2,185 contacts,  
16 1,511 of them received some type of service. And so I  
17 think it's very important to point out by doing this  
18 that even though not everybody might receive a service,  
19 and it could be for whatever reason, they may already  
20 have equipment or they may not be a Florida resident,  
21 whatever the case may be, we feel like it's important to  
22 demonstrate that the ads are generating calls to our  
23 office, and the average cost of that was \$53.53. So we  
24 wanted to point that out. And that's between July 1st  
25 to October 11th.

1           And just to back up a little bit. If you'll  
2 notice, the insert ad -- if you'll notice, the insert ad  
3 July 1st -- I'm sorry -- July 19, 2016, through  
4 June 30th, that is the referral source that centers will  
5 select when they know somebody comes in with an insert  
6 ad. So it's making it easy on us to have just one  
7 referral source for that. So that's what that is.  
8 That's how we know. When I do a report, that's the  
9 referral source that I will select to get this  
10 information. Although we have several others, but this  
11 is the one that I'm using for the newspaper.

12           And, again, the contacts also include people  
13 who have seen it on the website, who have come in and  
14 contacted us through the website.

15           The next slide is just a snapshot of what a  
16 report, a spreadsheet looks like when we are tracking  
17 through the newspaper. The placement company that we  
18 work with is able to actually -- they designed a  
19 spreadsheet, the spreadsheet that you're looking at.  
20 However, what they do is they will rely on our database  
21 to pull the information to enter into all these fields.  
22 And this gives us a cost per newspaper. This is what we  
23 use and review to determine whether a particular ad is  
24 working well in a particular area and newspaper. So  
25 this is a very important piece of information that we

1 use.

2           Because we have to work -- we have to place  
3 orders for insert ads a month ahead of time because of  
4 the different logistics of making sure you get the  
5 printed insert ad to the newspaper. Some newspapers  
6 don't print the ads themselves, so we have to print them  
7 and deliver. So we -- that's the reason why we have to  
8 place the ads way ahead of time. And so we use this  
9 information to help us determine which areas are working  
10 well and which ones are not. And if they're not, we'll  
11 suspend them and maybe what we'll do is we'll pick them  
12 up in the spring.

13           But we are trying to utilize the dollars that  
14 we have allocated for media/newspaper the best we can to  
15 generate the most we can on services from our audience.  
16 And so the, as I pointed out earlier, we feel like  
17 \$53.53 per contact is not a bad number to look at. It's  
18 pretty good, in my opinion.

19           My goal was to get it down to \$50 and we're  
20 pretty close. And that's only for three and a half  
21 months, so we'll see how the rest of the year goes.

22           Okay. And that pretty much concludes my  
23 report. I'll be happy to answer any questions anybody  
24 has.

25           **MR. WILLIAMS:** We can go ahead and open the

1 floor to questions to James regarding his presentation.

2 Yes, Chris.

3 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** The RDCs that are no longer  
4 existing and contracting with FTRI, what was the  
5 reasoning for disconnect? I know at least one of them  
6 is no longer an organization as a whole. So is that the  
7 case with all of them?

8 **MR. FORSTALL:** Two of them. Two of them  
9 closed their doors for good, and the one in Sarasota is  
10 the one I think you're referring to, the Community  
11 Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

12 When they contacted me to express regret that  
13 they have to close their doors, the director assured me  
14 that it has nothing to do with the FTRI program. It was  
15 because their other overall funding sources had dried  
16 up. And the same thing happened to the center in West  
17 Palm Beach. It was not because of the FTRI program. It  
18 was because of other funding sources.

19 And the third one was the CIL in Miami.  
20 Interesting is we had a contract with the CIL South  
21 Florida, which is located in Miami, for years, six,  
22 seven, eight years.

23 The director at that time retired and they  
24 brought in a new one, a new director, and that director  
25 made a decision to restructure the office. And so they

1 felt like terminating the FTRI contract was a step in  
2 the direction for them, and so that was primarily the  
3 reason why they did it.

4 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Thank you.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any other questions  
6 or comments regarding FTRI's presentation?

7 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Yes, this is Tom here, and I do  
8 have a question.

9 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, Tom.

10 **MR. D'ANGELO:** I'll wait for you to explain  
11 the budget plan with the cuts. I don't know if this is  
12 the right time to ask that or not.

13 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Well, I'll just go ahead and  
14 make one point, Tom, in terms of clarification.

15 Again, in response to your question, I just  
16 want to point out that the actual budget reduction,  
17 which was actually a reduction based on FTRI's proposed  
18 budget, and I think James touched on some of the  
19 questions that you may have, and that is the reductions  
20 were based on historical trends in terms of -- some of  
21 the issues that were addressed in the order are based on  
22 reductions, historical reductions in minutes of use and  
23 equipment distribution, as James presented in his  
24 presentation, showing that there are some declines in  
25 minutes of use, equipment distribution, contacts with

1 their office.

2 But if you refer to the order and also the  
3 recommendation that's in Docket No. 140029, I think that  
4 will also -- and if you need that information, please  
5 contact staff and we can provide that to you. But that  
6 will you give you a lot more detail in terms of the  
7 analysis and the decision-making process regarding  
8 FTRI's budget.

9 So, I mean, you know, this is -- you know, the  
10 purpose of this meeting going forward is more of an  
11 overview of FTRI's operation. But if you need more  
12 detail, staff will be more than happy to provide you  
13 with that information.

14 And with that, I'll let James provide any  
15 responses.

16 **MR. FORSTALL:** To respond to --

17 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Okay.

18 **MR. FORSTALL:** Do you want me to go ahead?

19 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Yes. Well, the one thing is I  
20 agree with what you're saying. Like I mentioned  
21 earlier, I see what's coming with the reduced number of  
22 distribution and customers. I can see that coming.

23 But what I'm concerned about and sensitive to  
24 is that the budget cut will impact services for the deaf  
25 and hard of hearing community across the state of

1 Florida, which is important. And that's why I wanted to  
2 know, you know, James' presentation of 2015, 2016.  
3 That's fine. But what I want to know is what's going to  
4 happen in the future, like a ballpark idea. You know,  
5 300,000, that's quite a reduction.

6 Are we going to see a reduction in staff? Are  
7 we going to see a reduction in services? That's why I  
8 was looking to James to give some kind of answer and  
9 reply to what is the plan.

10 **MR. FORSTALL:** I can explain the -- what FTRI  
11 will be doing this fiscal year with regard to the cut in  
12 the budget. But as far as answering the question on the  
13 future of FTRI, that all depends on what happens with  
14 the statutes. If new technology is not introduced to  
15 the program, then the decline will continue as is as  
16 much as 5, 6 percent a year.

17 One of the things that I can tell you that is  
18 happening --

19 **MR. D'ANGELO:** And that's my concern.

20 **MR. FORSTALL:** Yeah. I'll let Mr. Williams  
21 answer that question.

22 **MS. PAGE:** Well, as far as the staff --

23 **MS. RHODES:** Can I ask a question?

24 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes. Well, is that Cheryl?

25 **MS. RHODES:** Yes, this is Cheryl.



1           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes. Before --

2           **MS. RHODES:** James, since the National  
3 Deaf/Blind Equipment Distribution has been sent over to  
4 the centers, the FTRI seems to be declining with the  
5 equipment distribution. So how can FTRI or PSC help the  
6 deaf/blind in Florida, you know, with the equipment or  
7 in other ways moving forward?

8           **MR. FORSTALL:** I can tell you, Cheryl, that  
9 the Helen Keller National Center has taken on that  
10 responsibility to provide services through the  
11 iCanConnect program. And FTRI also can provide  
12 equipment, limited equipment to deaf/blind individuals  
13 in Florida. Again, it's based on the technology that  
14 the law allows us to distribute. And right now --  
15 unfortunately I just heard maybe a month, a month and a  
16 half ago that the Deaf/Blind Communicator that we were  
17 distributing, because it did fall within the definition  
18 of the law, is no longer being produced. It has been  
19 discontinued.

20                   So at this point we do not have any type of  
21 equipment that we are able to distribute for deaf/blind  
22 under the current laws, under the way the law is written  
23 because of the technology limitation.

24                   However, Helen Keller National Center is --  
25 has taken on the responsibility or over -- the

1 responsibility of providing equipment to deaf/blind  
2 individuals in Florida.

3 Now getting back to Tom's question about the  
4 -- I'm sorry. Before I move on, maybe, Cheryl, I can  
5 ask you if you have any other questions related to that.  
6 Go ahead.

7 **MS. RHODES:** Yes. I'm trying to think of how  
8 to word it, because you said the FTRI is still helping  
9 the deaf/blind people with the limited equipment.

10 What kind of equipment are you providing so  
11 that I can share with the Deaf/Blind Association? What  
12 kind of equipment are you allowed to distribute under  
13 the limits with the law?

14 **MR. FORSTALL:** Okay. We have been, in the  
15 past, distributing a Deaf/Blind Communicator which was  
16 made by Humanware. We still have some of those devices  
17 in our office. So if someone were to apply and request  
18 that equipment, we do have it available. But that's all  
19 we are allowed to distribute is the Deaf/Blind  
20 Communicator.

21 And if we do get a call or request, and we  
22 have been, for an individual that wants equipment that  
23 is distributed through the iCanConnect program, we refer  
24 them to the Helen Keller National Center for services  
25 and equipment.

1           **MS. RHODES:** Okay. My second question would  
2 be with the Helen Keller National Center, that's the  
3 National Deaf/Blind, they're now changing it to the  
4 Florida Deaf/Blind Distribution. Are they also only  
5 approved for those who qualify to get it for free, that  
6 equipment? But what about other deaf/blind people who  
7 don't qualify who are trying -- they have equipment but  
8 it's not very good?

9           I didn't know if the PSC was having state  
10 funds for Florida for the deaf/blind, if there was some  
11 way to get the help from the PSC and the various  
12 organizations.

13           **MR. FORSTALL:** This is James again. FTRI is  
14 limited in what we are able to provide. And I think  
15 what you're asking, if an individual does not qualify  
16 for the iCanConnect program and they need some sort of  
17 device, they can come through the FTRI program, but the  
18 only thing we have available is the Deaf/Blind  
19 Communicator. And it may not be what the individual  
20 wants, but that's all we have available.

21           **MS. RHODES:** Thank you.

22           **MR. D'ANGELO:** And this is Tom. I have  
23 another comment to make. But going back to Cheryl's  
24 concern and also my concern with the budget cuts is that  
25 James mentioned that we're limited with what kind of

1 equipment we can distribute and that's ongoing.

2 Now I used to work with Sprint and I've seen  
3 how the minutes and numbers have dropped clearly. There  
4 is a change in the trend of equipment distribution and  
5 technology, and with the legislation issues we are  
6 limited.

7 So I just want to make sure that the deaf and  
8 hard of hearing and the deaf/blind community receive  
9 accurate services and appropriate equipment as  
10 technology changes. Technology changes quickly. We  
11 cannot allow legislation to limit us. You know, that's  
12 not good management.

13 But I think if you look at it from both  
14 perspectives, I have the perspective as a customer as  
15 well, and I'm wondering what are your plans to change  
16 and improve this service so that it can be better and  
17 better serve people in the state of Florida and keep us  
18 ahead of the national services?

19 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Well, I'll just briefly, Tom,  
20 address that and may have our attorney, Pam Page, also  
21 address it.

22 But the Florida Public Service Commission has  
23 to operate within the parameters of the *Florida*  
24 *Statutes*, and at this time the program is operated  
25 within those parameters in terms of the equipment, the

1 types of equipment and the types of services that can be  
2 provided.

3 As you indicated and as James indicated,  
4 those -- some of those services are not as -- are not in  
5 as high a demand as they have been in the past, but they  
6 are in demand and they are valuable to some consumers.  
7 So we're operating within those statutory parameters.

8 **MS. PAGE:** And let me -- this is Pamela Page.

9 And let me just add that in the statute the  
10 specialized telecommunications devices are specifically  
11 described, and there are four specialized  
12 telecommunications devices that are distributed under  
13 the program. And the first is the TDD, a volume control  
14 handset, a ring signaling device, or other customer  
15 premises equipment, and this is how the statute defines  
16 specialized telecommunications devices. This is the  
17 reason that the statute limits what can be provided  
18 under the program.

19 **MR. D'ANGELO:** And this is Tom here. I  
20 understand and I'm aware of that. But, again, I think  
21 someone needs to be looking more seriously at this  
22 because the community, you know, in general -- I talk to  
23 people at the Florida Association for the Deaf. That's  
24 an ongoing decline, but that doesn't help us accommodate  
25 new technology changes. It's almost like an opposite in

1 trending. I mean, that's just my feedback, but I do  
2 thank you. I'll let you move on with the agenda.

3 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Tom. We appreciate  
4 your input.

5 Chris.

6 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** This is Chris. I just wanted  
7 to point out the fact that the same statute also  
8 specifies that technology is not limited to the things  
9 that were mentioned at the time the law was written,  
10 that also with technology advances. I understand it's  
11 excluding cell phones and cell phone service, but there  
12 are other forms of technology that use landlines or  
13 additional things like Bluetooth or broadband that could  
14 provide additional telecommunications services for  
15 people that are deaf or hard of hearing in the state of  
16 Florida without going outside the parameters of the  
17 state of Florida. And it just -- I'm not really clear  
18 why we're not moving forward with additional technology  
19 like the law was written.

20 **MS. PAGE:** We -- I agree with you. What I was  
21 referring to is the statutory language itself. But  
22 there are other devices that are distributed under the  
23 program. I agree.

24 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** But the statutory language,  
25 in a separate paragraph, talks about not limiting to

1 just the technology at the time the law was written,  
2 that with future advances in technology, that we should  
3 offer additional services or additional equipment that  
4 becomes available with the advances of technology.

5 And like Mr. D'Angelo said, it's not good  
6 management when we're limiting ourselves to old  
7 technology, antiquated technology, and we want to be  
8 able to move forward and allow FTRI to provide the best  
9 services and the pieces of equipment that people need  
10 and want. And it doesn't seem -- even though the law  
11 allows us to do that, it doesn't seem like we're  
12 allowing FTRI to do that.

13 **MS. PAGE:** I can only speak to the law. And  
14 as far as we can see, until the legislators -- the  
15 legislation is changed, we are bound by the law. And I  
16 recognize what the law says, that we need to take into  
17 account state-of-the-art technology, and that is a  
18 conundrum of the statute, if you will. But in terms of  
19 specifically stating what we can provide, we have to  
20 live within the confines of the statute until that is  
21 changed.

22 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Well, we'll just agree to  
23 disagree then because I think the law is written to  
24 where we can move forward with other technology as the  
25 law is written now.

1           **MS. SALAK:** May I ask a question?

2           **MS. PAGE:** Yes.

3           **MS. SALAK:** This is Beth Salak. I wanted to  
4 ask what do you believe in -- for landline usage that we  
5 can be distributing and we're not? You mentioned  
6 Bluetooth, and I just was wondering what else you had in  
7 mind.

8           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Landline is specific to, back  
9 when the law was written, to all of the existing analog  
10 technology. Broadband technology is still landline  
11 technology. It's not -- even though some pieces of it  
12 may be used through the Cloud, broadband still requires  
13 a cable line. That's a landline. So FTRI could be  
14 offering equipment that could be used through broadband  
15 technology.

16           **MS. SALAK:** I think part of the issue is that  
17 the definition of what can be distributed includes the  
18 word "telecommunications," since it's talking about  
19 telecommunications, and that's one of the things that  
20 narrows it. Because the other items are not considered  
21 telecommunications by law. Right?

22           **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I'm not clear on that because  
23 it's all telecommunications, whether it's analog  
24 telecommunications or broadband telecommunications, if  
25 you're using a phone that uses an analog line or if



1 you're using a phone that uses broadband technology.

2 **MS. SALAK:** I'm just saying there's different  
3 types of regulation, and some of it is considered  
4 telecommunications and some of it is a communication  
5 service but it's not telecommunications by law.

6 **MS. PAGE:** Do you have any other questions,  
7 Mr. Littlewood?

8 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I don't know what else I can  
9 say. Again, we'll just agree to disagree.

10 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any other questions,  
11 comments regarding FTRI's presentation?

12 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I wanted to say one more  
13 thing on that, if I could.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, please.

15 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Just because cable companies,  
16 broadband companies are now offering telecommunications  
17 service instead of exclusive analog services that offer  
18 telecommunications service, you're just shifting  
19 companies. They're still telecommunication companies  
20 even though it's a cable company instead of strictly  
21 phone service, and they offer other services like  
22 internet or broadband television.

23 I understand they offer other services, but I  
24 just don't see why the law restricts to only  
25 communication through telecommunications or a company

1 that offers only phone communication.

2 **MS. PAGE:** Well, part of the statute refers to  
3 telecommunications companies and what that means. And  
4 cellular carriers, I'm talking about -- I'm not talking  
5 about broadband right now because --

6 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** We're not talking about  
7 cellular.

8 **MS. PAGE:** -- I don't know that much about the  
9 technology. I can only speak to the law.

10 But telecommunications companies are defined  
11 in 427, and they do not include wireless carriers,  
12 cellular carriers. They're not -- that's not included  
13 in the definition. And I'm only reading from the law.  
14 I'm not construing it in terms of practicality. I'm  
15 just reading from what the law says, and we have to live  
16 within the confines of that until the legislation is  
17 changed. And that seems to really be the point that --

18 **MR. D'ANGELO:** This is Tom here, and I'm just  
19 trying to jump in. I'm not trying to beat a dead horse  
20 here.

21 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Tom, Tom --

22 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Obviously the law is limiting  
23 us. But as Mr. Williams says, technology is changing.  
24 I'm sorry, maybe not Mr. Williams. Maybe it was Chris.  
25 Technology is changing. We have to do something about

1 this, period.

2 I mean, as an issue -- we're supposed to be  
3 overseeing the program. Maybe there needs to be an  
4 addendum or something else or some outreach to the  
5 legislature so they become aware so that the deaf and  
6 hard of hearing community are up to date with what we're  
7 doing. We don't want to leave them in the old age or  
8 leave them in the dust. So that's the point, you know.

9 The services, the budgets are being cut, and  
10 in general that's going to hurt us. I don't see any  
11 reason why we need to continue discussing this and  
12 beating a dead horse. But I want you, as the staff, to  
13 recognize that you see you can change or interpret the  
14 law differently with today's technology and improve the  
15 accessibility, as Chris mentioned. That's just my two  
16 cents to throw in there with where we are.

17 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Tom, actually we --  
18 Ms. Page was responding, so we'll go ahead and allow her  
19 to continue, and then we'll proceed accordingly.

20 **MS. PAGE:** We read the statute as a whole, and  
21 we -- when we -- when the statute refers to advances in  
22 technology, I believe that's -- that is an intention,  
23 that's an intent of the statute. But then again there's  
24 a conflict in the statute because the statute defines  
25 specialized telecommunications devices very specifically

1 and also defines what telecommunication companies are.  
2 And these are portions of the legislation, of the  
3 statute that would need to be changed.

4 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Pam.

5 Actually James has a comment to follow up on  
6 that.

7 **MR. FORSTALL:** Yes. I think I want to respond  
8 to Tom's question earlier when he asked what can we do.  
9 And I think what you're asking, Tom, is if there's  
10 anything the Public Service Commission can do to assist  
11 with changing the law.

12 I do know for a fact that other state  
13 programs, the Commissioners are involved with changes to  
14 programs, and it would be nice to see if we can get the  
15 Florida Commission to be involved with some changes too.  
16 I think that might be what you were looking for.

17 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** This is Chris. Also when we  
18 talk about the cell phones in the mix, that's apples and  
19 oranges. I'm talking separately about telecommunication  
20 that is landline, which is what the law specifically  
21 talks about.

22 What we're saying when we're talking about  
23 analog versus broadband and not being able to provide  
24 any services that use broadband technology, which is  
25 newer technology than analog services, we're saying that

1 we're only allowing companies that are telecommunication  
2 companies and don't offer anything else.

3 Even the telecommunication companies back in  
4 the '80s when the law was written, if I'm correct in the  
5 year when the law was written, those companies now offer  
6 other services like internet services or other things  
7 involved in advances in telecommunications and other  
8 areas.

9 **MS. PAGE:** I can't really address the  
10 technology because --

11 **MR. D'ANGELO:** Chris, this is Tom. I guess I  
12 agree with that perspective.

13 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Well, I think we have discussed  
14 it at length quite a bit during this meeting.

15 And we are 15 minutes past our break time.  
16 We, at this point, must take a break for the benefit of  
17 the interpreters. So we've had a discussion on this  
18 issue in the past, actually a healthy discussion at the  
19 last meeting, and I'm sure it's a topic that's not going  
20 anywhere.

21 So at this time we'll take a break. It is  
22 approximately 3:00. We will go ahead and take a break,  
23 a 15-minute break, and we will resume at 3:15. Thank  
24 you.

25 (Recess taken.)

1           **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes. This is Curtis Williams,  
2 and we will start the meeting back at this time.

3           We will have a presentation by Jeff Branch  
4 with Sprint Relay to give the Sprint Relay service  
5 overview.

6           **MR. BRANCH:** Thank you. This is Jeff  
7 speaking. I'll be discussing the recent trends of TRS  
8 minutes, CapTel specifics, quality reports, outreach,  
9 and also explain a little bit about Sprint  
10 Accessibility.

11           The name is going to be changed from Sprint  
12 Relay over to Sprint Accessibility, and so I'm going to  
13 explain more in detail about that as we go along.

14           This is the RCC minutes. It shows the total  
15 minutes used, and that red line there shows how it's  
16 increased. It's gone all the way up. As of September,  
17 we maximized at 15,000 minutes, and those 15,000 minutes  
18 were part of a contract that Sprint provided.

19           They provided 15,000 free minutes for RCC to  
20 use, and we've already maxed out and so we've stopped  
21 those services. We do have a disclaimer on the website  
22 that we're going to be stopping the service. It's there  
23 at [www.FloridaRCC.com](http://www.FloridaRCC.com), and you'll see the disclaimer  
24 there. We also -- it has my email address there just in  
25 case anybody wants to reach out to me to discuss it,

1 discuss the specifics of RCC.

2 So the blue line there represents the  
3 month-to-month RCC usage. The next slide --

4 **MR. FORSTALL:** Can you use RCC to join this  
5 meeting?

6 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Yes, I can, but I knew the  
7 problem was already happening where they are maxed out  
8 in minutes. And this is a public meeting and my thought  
9 that -- was that the PSC would set up a caption line for  
10 this meeting for all people to access the meeting.

11 And since the interruption has already  
12 happened, I'll ask the question that I have. And when  
13 you said that RCC is going to stop, does that mean it  
14 stopped because we're maxed out for this year, or is it  
15 stopping and it's finished? In the future will we have  
16 it again?

17 **MR. BRANCH:** Yes. To answer Chris's  
18 question -- this is Jeff speaking -- this is a per year.  
19 So it started March 1st through February 28th. So as of  
20 March 2016 all the way up until September, which is when  
21 we stopped because we maxed out on our 15,000 minutes,  
22 we will be -- the numbers will be resetting again in  
23 March of 2017, and it'll go back to zero, and then we  
24 can work our way up again.

25 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** So we need to wait until

1 March --

2 **MR. BRANCH:** Correct.

3 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** -- again to use RCC?

4 **MR. BRANCH:** Correct.

5 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** And that's why I expressed my  
6 concern last year when people from the Department of  
7 Health wanted to start using RCC for public meetings.  
8 That's not what it was designed for. It was designed  
9 for individuals that needed to use it. I mean, to call  
10 for an important doctor phone call or for an interview,  
11 a phone interview for a job or something like that where  
12 CapTel is not really fast enough and not really accurate  
13 enough. And now with the 15,000 minutes that we have  
14 under the contract, it's only really enough for about  
15 half of the year. Right?

16 **MR. BRANCH:** Yeah.

17 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** And the only way that we can  
18 change that, I'm sure, is to pay. I'm sure the PSC or  
19 whatever doesn't want to do that, and I'm sure that  
20 they're right and I really would agree with that. But I  
21 think that the RCC needs to be used as it was supposed  
22 to be used by individuals and not for public meetings  
23 because I think that is part of the reason why the  
24 minutes have gone up so fast. I could be wrong.

25 **MR. FORSTALL:** Chris, is RCC designed for



1 anyone to use to join a conference call?

2 **MR. BRANCH:** RCC is for public use for anyone  
3 in the state of Florida. There's no restrictions to it.

4 **MR. FORSTALL:** Okay. So -- okay.

5 **MR. BRANCH:** Okay. Moving on. Any questions?

6 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** It can be used that way, but  
7 then 15,000 minutes is not going to be enough. Clearly  
8 we're seeing that.

9 **MR. FORSTALL:** So how can we increase it is  
10 the question?

11 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** I mean, maybe --

12 **MS. RHODES:** This is Cheryl. I wanted to make  
13 a comment.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes. Go ahead, Cheryl.

15 Yes, Cheryl, you can go ahead.

16 **MS. RHODES:** This is Cheryl speaking. And  
17 what is the RCC? What does that stand for? That's a  
18 new acronym for me.

19 **MR. BRANCH:** It stands for Relay Conference  
20 Captions, and it allows us to have captions in meeting  
21 rooms specifically for people who --

22 **MS. RHODES:** Okay.

23 **MR. FORSTALL:** So how can we amend the  
24 contract to increase the number of hours?

25 **MR. BRANCH:** Right now the contract is set for

1 15,000 minutes annually, so I don't -- I'm not the one  
2 who makes the adjustments. That would be the State.  
3 The PSC would do that.

4 **MR. FORSTALL:** So the question is how can  
5 we -- can the PSC amend the contract to increase the  
6 number of hours?

7 **MR. WILLIAMS:** At this time, no. The contract  
8 is the contract, and that was an add-on that Sprint  
9 offered as part of the contract, yeah, as part of their  
10 service. So, you know, we would -- you know, the --  
11 those are the free minutes that are available as part of  
12 the negotiated contract or the approved contract.

13 **MR. FORSTALL:** Can I ask Sprint a question?  
14 If the reason to provide that available was to  
15 demonstrate that there's a need for it, and clearly it  
16 was shown that there's a need for it, is it your hope  
17 that the PSC will make it a part of the contract ongoing  
18 and maybe pay for it?

19 **MR. BRANCH:** Maybe.

20 **MR. FORSTALL:** I'm just curious.

21 **MR. BRANCH:** Okay. Can we move on? Any  
22 questions?

23 **MR. WILLIAMS:** We can move on.

24 **MR. BRANCH:** Okay. The next slide is the  
25 Florida French Gate, and this shows here in Florida the

1 numbers that you see, they fluctuate quite a bit.

2 The green -- the green session minutes and  
3 then the blue is the inbound calls and then the red is  
4 the outbound calls, the completed calls.

5 The same goes for Spanish-to-English  
6 translations. It shows session minutes on the green  
7 line. The blue line represents the inbound calls. And  
8 then you'll see the red line is the outbound calls, and  
9 those are the numbers there. It was declining but now  
10 it seems to be more stable.

11 The next slide shows TRS utilization and the  
12 total minutes of service used month by month from March  
13 until August. There is some decline, but then it kind  
14 of picks back up. It does decline slightly though, so.

15 The same goes for CapTel. You'll see the  
16 numbers drop with session minutes probably because it  
17 was transferred to an IP based. This is analog based  
18 currently.

19 The next slide shows Florida quality reports,  
20 and we always do quality assurance reports on both TRS  
21 and CapTel, and it ensures that we are providing and  
22 meeting the requirements. So this shows the numbers  
23 that we tested every month on a monthly basis.

24 This next slide is the expense report for  
25 outreach. We've done HLA Florida website, a promotional

1 banner on their website. So we've also done the RCC  
2 video on the website under FTRI on their website.  
3 There's some Relay options there in RCC. Previously we  
4 had a temporary video for RCC and it showed New Jersey  
5 state. We switched it over to Florida state, and that's  
6 the state it's at currently. But it's actually the same  
7 video. We just replaced the state name from New Jersey  
8 to Florida. It's our state branding. And James and I  
9 are discussing further outreach plans to ensure that we  
10 have plans for the future.

11 We're going to discuss Sprint Accessibility.  
12 Sprint has decided to change the name from Sprint Relay  
13 to Sprint Accessibility, and the reason being is that  
14 we're not limited to only Relay services, but we are  
15 also broadening our services to provide for deaf and  
16 blind and also low vision services. So we're  
17 generalizing that and we're looking at different  
18 services that we can use for the various accessibilities  
19 that are needed.

20 I just mentioned this, but with -- I've been  
21 with Sprint for 26 years. They've been the leading  
22 provider in Relay services and have expanded their  
23 customer base from deaf to deaf/blind, hard of hearing,  
24 blind, and low vision, speech disabilities to serve  
25 customers with all types of disabilities. That's why

1 we've decided to name it Sprint Accessibility, and you  
2 will see that here moving forward.

3 And you'll see in the corner of the PowerPoint  
4 where it says, "Sprint Relay," that's going to be  
5 swapped over to "Sprint Accessibility" everywhere, on  
6 our business cards, on logos and everything. So just so  
7 you guys are all aware.

8 The mission statement for Sprint is to provide  
9 communication products and services for clients with  
10 disabilities. Sprint Accessibility is committed to  
11 reducing or removing impairment or barriers by equipment  
12 serving all of our customers either directly or mixed  
13 with assistive technology in order to enhance people's  
14 everyday lives.

15 This Sprint Accessibility program includes,  
16 but is not limited to, Sprint Relay, Sprint CapTel,  
17 wireless Sprint Relay Store, wireless Vision Store. And  
18 the Vision Store has specific phones that are accessible  
19 for low vision or deaf/blind clients.

20 Also we have VCS, which is video customer  
21 service. Customers who use American Sign Language can  
22 communicate directly to customer service for assistance  
23 or whatever requests they have. So it's basically  
24 customer service for them, so.

25 Now you may have some questions about how it

1 will impact the state program, and there isn't going to  
2 be any impact to the state programs. Everything is  
3 going to stay the same. Nothing will be changing.

4 Some states have Sprint, the Sprint logo with  
5 the state, but here we don't have that. So there's not  
6 going to be an impact here at all.

7 And that's the end. Do you have any  
8 questions?

9 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I have a question.

10 On the -- regarding Sprint Accessibility, that  
11 decision, is that -- was that discussed throughout the  
12 industry, and should we look for other Relay providers  
13 to associate with the term "accessibility," or was that  
14 purely a Sprint decision alone?

15 **MR. BRANCH:** It was just Sprint's decision  
16 alone.

17 **MR. WILLIAMS:** So going forward, the terms  
18 "relay" and "accessibility" will be used interchangeably  
19 throughout the industry.

20 **MR. BRANCH:** Yes. It means the same thing.  
21 It's just that it used to be very specific to Relay, and  
22 we are now doing other things. So it's just broadening  
23 the brand to Sprint Accessibility. And what Sprint  
24 Accessibility has includes Relay services along with  
25 deaf/blind, low vision, speech to speech, all -- it

1 includes all of those things and it's all incorporated  
2 into this.

3 **MR. WILLIAMS:** I understand. Thank you.

4 **MR. BRANCH:** Okay.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any other questions  
6 for Jeff? If not, at this time we will open the floor  
7 up for any additional discussion before we close the  
8 meeting.

9 I did have a couple of points to make. I  
10 know, Chris, we -- at the very beginning of the meeting  
11 we -- you brought up the point about reaching out to  
12 organizations that may be interested in serving on the  
13 TASA board. So we will -- we've made note of that, and,  
14 again, we will work closely with you on making sure that  
15 we formally present those invitations and opportunities.

16 **MR. LITTLEWOOD:** Thank you. Yes, if you just  
17 email me, I'll provide you connections with any of the  
18 groups that you may need that you don't already have.

19 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. And I do want to mention  
20 that Rick Kottler, who is the executive director of the  
21 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast,  
22 he did contact us and mentioned that he had a last  
23 minute conflict. He wanted to join us, but he was not  
24 able to participate in this meeting because of a last  
25 minute conflict.

1           Are there any other questions, comments?  
2       Hearing none, at this time we will go ahead and close  
3       today's meeting.

4           We want to thank everyone for participating,  
5       thank everyone for attending in person, and thank  
6       everyone for participating by phone.

7           We will have the next TASA meeting tentatively  
8       scheduled for April 2017. We'll provide an email with  
9       the exact date as early as possible based on the  
10      Commission's calendar and the availability of the room  
11      here and the support staff for the Commission.

12          But, again, we want to thank everyone for  
13      participating, and at this time we'll conclude the  
14      meeting.

15          (Meeting concluded at 3:37 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF FLORIDA )  
 : CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER  
2 COUNTY OF LEON )

3  
4 I, LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR, Official Commission  
Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing  
5 proceeding was heard at the time and place herein  
stated.

6  
7 IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I  
stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the  
8 same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;  
and that this transcript constitutes a true  
transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

9  
10 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,  
employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor  
11 am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'  
attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I  
12 financially interested in the action.

13 DATED THIS 26th day of October, 2016.

14  
15 LINDA BOLES

16 LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR  
17 FPSC Official Hearings Reporter  
(850) 413-6734