

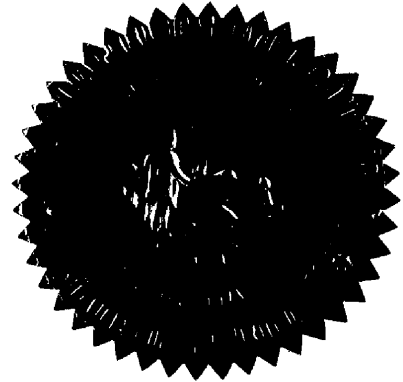
BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 991222-TP

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In The Matter of

IMPLEMENTATION OF FLORIDA  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS  
SYSTEM ACT OF 1991.



PROCEEDINGS:           ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE:                   Monday, April 8, 2002

TIME:                   Commenced at 1:00 p.m.  
                          Concluded at 4:27 p.m.

PLACE:                  Betty Easley Conference Center  
                          Hearing Room 152  
                          4075 Esplanade Way  
                          Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY:           JANE FAUROT, RPR  
                          Chief, Office of Hearing Reporter Services  
                          FPSC Division of Commission Clerk and  
                          Administrative Services  
                          (850) 413-6731

DOCUMENT NUMBER - DATE

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

1 IN ATTENDANCE.

2 JAMES FORSTALL, Executive Director, FTRI.

3 ROBERT GIUNTOLI, Sprint.

4 STEPHEN HARDY, Florida Association of the  
5 Deaf, Inc.

6 SHIRLEY JONES, Self-help for the Hard of Hearing.

7 JERRY CONNER, Deaf Service Center Association.

8 NORMAN H. HORTON, FTRI.

9 JIM SMITH, Sprint.

10 RUSSELL FLEMING, AT&T.

11 ANDREW BRENNEMAN, Sprint.

12 CHRIS WAGNER, Florida Association of the Deaf.

13 SUSAN LANGSTON, Florida Telecommunications Industry.

14 ANDREW J. LANGE, Government Systems Division.

15

16 FOR THE FPSC:

17 BETH SALAK, RICK MOSES, and SUSAN HOWARD,

18 LAURA KING, FPSC Division of Competitive Services.

19 MARTHA CARTER BROWN, FPSC Division of Legal Services.

20

21

22 INTERPRETERS:

23

STEVIE FENTON

24

BETTY DEAN

25

26

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

1  
2 MS. SALAK: We are trying to wait for Mr. Hardy. I  
3 think we will just go ahead and start, and then do some  
4 housework kind of business and, hopefully, he will catch up  
5 with us.

6 Do you know how long it might be before he is here?

7 MR. WAGNER: No, I am waiting for him to page me  
8 back.

9 MS. SALAK: All right. Thanks.

10 I just wanted to welcome you all for starters. We  
11 haven't had a meeting since, I think, November. So I wanted to  
12 discuss, first of all, the membership of this panel, of the  
13 committee. We have had several people that need to be  
14 replaced, and we have had substitutes filling in for them.  
15 Plus we have had a couple of other people that have been  
16 nominated, and I just wanted to mention who those are.  
17 Mr. Hardy, Mr. Wagner, Carlos Monserrate, I believe is how you  
18 say his name, and Harry Anderson.

19 For each of those gentlemen to become official  
20 members, we have to get it approved by the Commission. It was  
21 asked at the last advisory committee meeting if you all could  
22 have some input. And so those are the four people that we know  
23 of that are willing to serve and have been nominated. We have  
24 gotten some letters of recommendations for a couple of them.

25 And so I just -- we will be taking this to agenda in

1 conjunction with the FTRI budget and also a recommendation we  
2 have to do on Sprint's contract. So I just wanted to let you  
3 know that is where we stand with the members.

4 But I have failed to go around the room and introduce  
5 us. I'm so sorry. Let me start. I am Beth Salak. I am with  
6 the Public Service Commission.

7 MS. BROWN: I'm Martha Carter Brown with the  
8 Commission.

9 MS. KING: I'm Laura King with the Commission staff.

10 MS. HOWARD: Susan Howard with the Commission staff.

11 MR. SMITH: Jim Smith with Sprint, representing the  
12 long distance carriers.

13 MR. HARDY: Hi. My name is Stephen Hardy. I'm with  
14 the Florida Association for the Deaf.

15 MR. WAGNER: I'm Chris Wagner, Florida Association  
16 for the Deaf.

17 MS. JONES: I'm Shirley Jones, Self-Help for the Hard  
18 of Hearing.

19 MS. SALAK: Could those in the audience introduce  
20 themselves, please?

21 MR. FORSTALL: Good afternoon, I'm James Forstall,  
22 Executive Director of FTRI.

23 MR. MONSERRATE: Carlos Monserrate. You said my name  
24 correctly.

25 MS. SALAK: Oh, thank you.

1 MR. MONSERRATE: I am with the Division of Blind  
2 Services. I also happen to be with the Florida Association of  
3 Self-Help for Hard of Hearing people.

4 MR. BRENNEMAN: Good afternoon. I'm Andrew Brenneman  
5 with Sprint Relay Services.

6 MR. GIUNTOLI: Good afternoon. I'm Robert Giuntoli.  
7 I'm the account manager for the Florida Relay for Sprint.

8 MR. LANGE: Good afternoon. I am Andrew Lange from  
9 Sprint sales.

10 MR. HORTON: I'm Doc Horton. I'm counsel for FTRI.

11 MS. JOHNSON: Donna Jean Johnson with FTRI.

12 MS. SALAK: Excellent. Again, welcome everyone. I  
13 prematurely finished the item on the members of the board.  
14 Would anybody else like to -- or the committee -- would anybody  
15 else like to make any comments on it or have any questions?

16 I believe we have one more member who has arrived,  
17 and her name is -- would you like to introduce yourself?

18 MS. LANGSTON: First of all, I apologize for being  
19 late. I am Susan Langston with the Florida Telecommunications  
20 Industry Association.

21 MS. SALAK: Thank you. I think some of these items  
22 should be short today, just like the first one, but we wanted  
23 to save some time at the end because I understand there are  
24 some complaints or comments from members of FLASH that we  
25 wanted to have time to cover. So our next is a presentation

1 from FTRI on their budget.

2 James, are you ready to do that?

3 MS. JONES: He stepped out for a second to get a  
4 drink of water.

5 MS. SALAK: James, are you ready to do that?

6 MR. FORSTALL: Good afternoon, everyone. And thank  
7 you, Commission staff, for allowing me to be here to make the  
8 presentation on the FTRI proposed budget for fiscal year  
9 2002-2003. The FTRI budget is separated into two sections, and  
10 the first one is operating revenue which, of course, is the  
11 revenue. And then we have the expense section that consists of  
12 five different categories. Category One, the relay service  
13 category; two, the equipment and repair; Three is equipment  
14 distribution training; Four is outreach; and the fifth category  
15 is general and administrative.

16 Based on the best information available to us, the  
17 FTRI Board of Directors has approved a recommendation to reduce  
18 the surcharge level to eight cents for the new fiscal year. We  
19 estimate that a surcharge at this level will enable FTRI to  
20 maintain its current level of services for the next year. This  
21 approach will also allow for reduction of the surplus to a  
22 level of one month's expenses, about \$1.2 million, as  
23 authorized by the Public Service Commission.

24 The budget, as approved by the board, projects total  
25 revenues to be about \$10,630,671 and total expenses to be

1 \$15,130,834. The difference will be transferred from the  
2 surplus account which will be approximately \$5,731,032 at the  
3 end of the current fiscal year. The operating revenues.  
4 Surcharge revenue for fiscal year 2002 and 2003 are based on a  
5 1.25 percent growth factor, and the total number of access  
6 lines reported and estimated in fiscal year 2001-2002.

7 The average rate of growth for the past several years  
8 has been about 3 to 4 percent, but in the first six months of  
9 fiscal year 2001-2002 a dramatic drop in access line growth has  
10 occurred. Therefore, FTRI is projecting a 1.25 percent growth  
11 rate during the next fiscal year. Interest income for the next  
12 fiscal year is projected to be about \$46,127.

13 MS. SALAK: James, would you like questions  
14 throughout your presentation or at the end?

15 MR. FORSTALL: Sure. I do welcome questions  
16 throughout the presentation.

17 MS. SALAK: The access line growth that you  
18 projected, the 1.25 percent, what was your source for that?

19 MR. FORSTALL: The history, the historical data that  
20 we have collected during the past ten years, reported access  
21 line from the telephone company that is reported on the monthly  
22 surcharge report.

23 MS. SALAK: Okay. So that is a ten-year average?

24 MR. FORSTALL: It's a ten-year average. Over the  
25 last ten years we have been averaging 3 to 4 percent a year

1 growth.

2 MS. SALAK: And on a ten-year basis, it is down to  
3 1.25 percent?

4 MR. FORSTALL: No. Over the last ten years -- that  
5 is okay. Over the last ten years the average growth was  
6 between 3 and 4 percent.

7 MS. SALAK: Right.

8 MR. FORSTALL: And this past current year -- this  
9 current fiscal year, the first six months, we have seen a  
10 growth of only about 1.25 percent.

11 MS. BROWN: What do you explain the drop to? Do you  
12 have any idea?

13 MR. FORSTALL: It could be several reasons. It could  
14 be recession. It could be the 911 situation, but it is just  
15 what has been reported to us.

16 MS. SALAK: Thank you.

17 MR. FORSTALL: Here is a breakdown, the math that  
18 shows how we have accumulated the revenue on the total number  
19 of access lines with the proposed surcharge level of 8 cents  
20 total revenue and then less one percent administrative cost for  
21 the telephone companies, net operating revenue, plus the  
22 interest income, the total operating revenues of \$10,630,671.  
23 The difference of approximately \$4-1/2 million will be  
24 transferred from the surplus account to meet the projected  
25 expenses.



1           Category One, Florida Relay. The fiscal year  
2 2002-2003 budget for relay is based on projections submitted by  
3 the relay provider. The contract rate is 73 cents per billable  
4 minute. Using the data submitted by the relay provider, it is  
5 estimated that a 2.014 percent increase is expected over last  
6 year's estimated year-end total of 11,462,159 billable minutes.  
7 The Category One expense should be approximately \$8,535,912.

8           MS. SALAK: James, on that you're showing an increase  
9 of 2.014 percent, and yet in your budget you are showing it as  
10 a decrease from this year to next year in revenues.

11           MR. FORSTALL: That is in billable minutes. Okay.  
12 The total billable minutes will be a 2.014 percent increase  
13 over what we estimated to be at the end of this year.

14           MS. SALAK: Uh-huh.

15           MR. FORSTALL: You are talking about the total dollar  
16 amount being less?

17           MS. SALAK: Yes. Is that just from a one-time  
18 payment or --

19           MR. FORSTALL: Let me pull up my -- unless you are  
20 looking at something different, I have 8,535,912.

21           MS. SALAK: That is the amount that you have in your  
22 budget. I am looking at the estimate for this year, to finish  
23 up this year.

24           MR. FORSTALL: The estimate at the end of this year  
25 will be \$8,867,376.

1 MS. SALAK: Right. So you are talking about a  
2 decrease from this year to next year, and I was just  
3 wondering -- in revenues.

4 MR. FORSTALL: The difference will be we are paying  
5 12 cents today and we are proposing 8 cents per billable  
6 minute. I'm sorry, with the -- you're right. You have got a  
7 point there. The per billable rate stays the same.

8 MS. SALAK: Right. I just can't remember if there is  
9 a one-time payment during that time frame.

10 MR. FORSTALL: Yes, you're right. Okay. Thank you  
11 for correcting me.

12 Equipment and repairs. During fiscal year 2001-2002,  
13 it is estimated that FTRI will have distributed over 53,832  
14 pieces of new equipment. Of that total, 37,588 were the new  
15 VCPHs and 11,366 were the ARSs. It is projected that the  
16 fiscal year 2002 and 2003 number of new equipment distributed  
17 will be over 54,000. The total proposed budget for Category  
18 Two is 3,470,648.

19 Okay. What we are proposing in next year's budget is  
20 the possibility of including a new piece of equipment.  
21 Historically, we have had some conversations with the  
22 laryngectomee community about distributing a device to assist  
23 them with communicating on the telephone. And in the past the  
24 device that was being proposed did not fit within the  
25 definition. However, a company by the name of Griffin Lab

1 (phonetic) has developed this new product which will make the  
2 device work exclusively with the telephone only. If you were  
3 to unplug that particular electrolynx from the phone it will  
4 not work. And so they are still in the process of developing  
5 this device. We have not seen a final prototype of it. We are  
6 looking into it, and we will do all of our testing, board  
7 approval, et cetera, to make sure that it fits within the TASA  
8 law, to include that as part of the distribution of equipment.

9           The reason we wanted to budget -- we budgeted 250  
10 units for the next year is in the event that this product is  
11 developed, completed, and approved that we will have the  
12 funding available to distribute it beginning next year. So  
13 that is still in the early stages, and we feel like it is going  
14 to be a product that can meet that particular population, and  
15 we are pretty excited about that.

16           MS. SALAK: And you said your board looked at it for  
17 legality to make sure that we could -- you could distribute it?

18           MR. FORSTALL: Yes. Category Three, equipment  
19 distribution and training. During fiscal year 2001-2002, it is  
20 estimated that FTRI will have served approximately 24,936 new  
21 clients, and an additional 19,896 who received some type of  
22 maintenance service. In addition, FTRI added Pensacola to its  
23 list of regional distribution sites and is currently working to  
24 add another site this fiscal year. We are also anticipating  
25 expanding to add one, possibly two new sites during the next

1 fiscal year. The total proposed budget for Category Three is  
2 \$1,199,592.

3           Category Four, outreach. During fiscal year  
4 2001-2002, significant progress has been made in the  
5 development of both Florida Relay and the equipment outreach  
6 material. We produced -- three Florida Relay public service  
7 announcement have been produced and aired throughout the state.  
8 Two special 711 PSAs have been produced and aired throughout  
9 the state. Media purchases of a 3-to-1 ratio, which means that  
10 for every dollar we spent we were able to get a \$3 match from  
11 the cable and broadcast, and the Florida Relay Business Partner  
12 kit, which I will be talking about in-depth a little bit more.

13           During fiscal year 2001-2002, FTRI developed and  
14 disseminated new outreach materials to promote the equipment  
15 distribution program. We developed and disseminated the "Pass  
16 It On," brochure, as you see up on the screen. We produced one  
17 video on the equipment distribution program that was completed  
18 March 26th. We developed and produced a PSA spot which we  
19 anticipate being completed on June 15. And, of course, the  
20 Florida Relay Business Partner kit, which includes some  
21 information about the equipment distribution program and the  
22 new revised website which we anticipate being completed April  
23 15.

24           In fiscal year 2002-2003 we will continue the  
25 implementation of the Florida Relay Business Partner program.

1 Targeted areas for the next year are going to be the Tampa-St.  
2 Pete-Pasco area, Pensacola, Palm Beach, Orlando, Fort  
3 Lauderdale, Miami, Keys, Daytona, Melbourne and Vero. The  
4 total proposed budget for the Florida Relay of Category Four is  
5 \$502,000.

6           And Category Four, continuing with outreach. In  
7 fiscal year 2002-2003, we will begin promoting the equipment  
8 distribution program through PSA throughout the state. Some of  
9 the other major activities will include newsletter, regional  
10 outreach, media purchase, a Spanish version of the PSA and  
11 printed materials. The total proposed budget for FTRI  
12 equipment distribution program outreach in Category Four is  
13 \$425,550.

14           Category Five, general and administrative. The  
15 general and administrative category for fiscal year 2002-2003  
16 is projected to be approximately 6.5 percent of the overall  
17 expenses.

18           Another note, on February 27th, FTRI moved its office  
19 to a new facility. The new facility allows all staff to be  
20 situated on the same floor in one office complex. FTRI gained  
21 about 800 additional square feet to accommodate growth. Total  
22 proposed budget for Category Five is \$997,132.

23           Does anybody else have any questions? I would  
24 like -- after answering questions, I would like to show the  
25 video if it is okay.

1           MR. HARDY: I'm curious. During this decrease of the  
2 number, have you talked about Internet relay, video relay  
3 services that may have caused the decrease?

4           MR. FORSTALL: You are talking about the Florida  
5 Relay billable minutes decreasing?

6           MR. HARDY: I'm talking about people and the  
7 communication taking turns that they have other providers,  
8 other choices that we don't provide. Let's say, for example,  
9 some people use the Internet relay now. They can call through  
10 that, and that is a trend right now that is popping up. And  
11 that is some video relay so that people can sign during their  
12 relay calls. That is a trend that is beginning to build. That  
13 may be causing the number of minutes to decline, do you think?

14          MR. FORSTALL: That is a possibility, but as far as  
15 the people choosing to use the relay service that might be  
16 something that the Sprint Relay may be able to answer that  
17 question for you. However, with the equipment distribution  
18 side, we are seeing a small increase over the number of new  
19 clients served last year and the number of equipment  
20 distributed. And we are entitled -- we pinpoint that to be a  
21 combination of outreach that we are doing, promoting the  
22 program, more so this year than we have in the past. Plus the  
23 regional distributions are also out promoting the program as  
24 well. So we are working well together with our contracted  
25 centers to get more and more people to be aware of the services

1 that we provide.

2 MS. SALAK: Does Sprint want to comment on that  
3 question?

4 MR. GIUNTOLI: The question I have is why did you  
5 pick those cities for the outreach program?

6 MR. FORSTALL: The question was -- I'll repeat the  
7 question. The question was why were those cities picked out or  
8 targeted for the outreach program? That is part of our next 15  
9 or 16-month plan. We are planning to do about three cities  
10 this year. Tallahassee being one, Jacksonville being the other  
11 and Ft. Myers being the other for this fiscal year. And it's  
12 only -- we wanted to work in certain populated areas to start  
13 with. And this program, the Business Partnership Kit program  
14 is going to be an ongoing program. We will be creating the  
15 awareness to get the program up and going during the next few  
16 months.

17 However, we will continue working with centers  
18 throughout the state and going back to the cities over and over  
19 again. And that was the way we developed the outreach to  
20 target those particular areas.

21 MS. SALAK: I think his question was geared more at  
22 why those specific places? Is it because they are populated  
23 or -- was that the criteria?

24 MR. FORSTALL: Yes. And also because of the ability  
25 to make media purchases in those areas. For example, if we

1 were to address the Miami area -- or, for example, the Tampa  
2 area is a better example. When you purchase media time to  
3 promote the program you are covering more area, so we were  
4 trying to get as much coverage as we possibly could.

5 MR. HARDY: I have a question. With the foreign  
6 languages, how are you doing outreach regarding Spanish or  
7 Creole? How is that working so far in that area?

8 MR. FORSTALL: Right now the only outreach we have  
9 done is through the centers, through the outreach through the  
10 centers. If there are some centers that concentrate mainly on  
11 these special population in their area, we provide them with  
12 printed material. That is all we have available right now.  
13 However, during the next fiscal year we intend to translate  
14 some of the PSAs into Spanish and air those as well.

15 MR. HARDY: Okay.

16 MS. SALAK: Any other questions?

17 MR. HARDY: Did you have a question for me?

18 MS. SALAK: I asked if you wanted to respond to the  
19 question about other technologies taking business away from the  
20 relay system.

21 MR. GIUNTOLI: I wanted to know if -- why are the  
22 relay numbers going down? Really, we see that in some states  
23 the relay numbers have grown, and in some states the relay  
24 numbers have leveled out, they have stabilized. We usually do  
25 not see those numbers, relay numbers dropping; we see them



1 being stabilized or growing. For the states they are growing,  
2 it depends on their outreach program and also new equipment  
3 distribution. For example, like South Carolina every month we  
4 broke records on the relay call volume because of their  
5 distribution program. And in some states the relay calls  
6 stabilized.

7           Okay. In some states the relay numbers have  
8 stabilized because of the technology, these beepers here,  
9 WinTel and FAX (phonetic). Different new technology has taken  
10 the place of these different equipment, yes, that is true.  
11 But, for example, the relay going down, those numbers, that  
12 should not happen.

13           MS. SALAK: I thought that there was a drop in  
14 dollars, but the minutes were projected to go up; is that  
15 right?

16           MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes, that is right.

17           MS. SALAK: Do you think Turbo Code (phonetic) has  
18 had any impact on Florida?

19           MR. GIUNTOLI: Turbo Code makes the calls quicker.  
20 So, yes, I would say it does save the state some money  
21 regarding connection time. It makes the calls more efficient,  
22 but on the other hand if you make a call more efficient, people  
23 do want to stay on the line longer, so there is a balance. It  
24 should even out.

25           MS. SALAK: Does Sprint do studies to see if there is

1 substitutions for their service and if people are using those  
2 substitutions?

3 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. Sprint is always looking into  
4 new technology. And I plan to give a short presentation on the  
5 new technology that we have offered to Florida for free. And  
6 later I will be doing that, maybe.

7 MS. SALAK: Sure, that will be great.

8 MR. GIUNTOLI: Okay. Great.

9 MS. SALAK: Any other questions before James shows  
10 the video?

11 All right. James, you're on.

12 MR. FORSTALL: What I have here is some of the kits  
13 that we put together. I will need these back before we leave,  
14 because they are not ready to disseminate. What you are  
15 looking at right now is the business partnership that we have  
16 worked diligently over the last 12 months putting together.  
17 The intent of this is to get more and more businesses involved  
18 and educated on how to use the relay service. And what you  
19 see, we have a video that goes on the inside of it. And we  
20 will be contacting businesses throughout the state, inviting  
21 them to become partners with us.

22 We call them the relay partners, relay business  
23 partners. And we developed a video that goes along with it,  
24 and inside you will find a manual that explains how to use the  
25 relay and gives a demonstration and example of how relay calls

1 are made. And this is not -- there is no charge for a business  
2 partner to sign up. And the intent is to get as many  
3 businesses educated about this.

4           Once they have agreed to become a partner, they fill  
5 out a card and forward it to us. We in turn will either go  
6 there personally or we will mail them a package. Initially we  
7 plan to meet with them face-to-face. And once they have agreed  
8 to participate in the program, we will give them the kit. And  
9 the kit was designed for them to educate and train their  
10 employees, to make them more sensitive to the needs of the  
11 hearing-impaired and speech-impaired community and population.

12           And we developed a video. It kind of works both  
13 ways. It can be used as a promotional tape and as the training  
14 tape. And the video is about -- it is about ten minutes long.  
15 And most of the people that you see in the video are actual  
16 clients throughout the state that we were able to recruit to  
17 participate and promote the relay program.

18           And just working with some of the businesses who have  
19 agreed to participate, they are all excited about it. Everyone  
20 had nothing but positive comments to make about it. You will  
21 see in the video we were real pleased with the end product.  
22 And the next step for FTRI is to meet together with different  
23 directors throughout the state with deaf service center  
24 directors, RDCs and different people to help give us some input  
25 as to what might be a good way to go out and disseminate it.

1 Obviously, we can't do it all ourselves. FTRI intends to meet  
2 with the major manufacturers or corporations. We will  
3 personally go there ourselves and talk with them and get them  
4 involved in the program. And we want to work closely with  
5 centers throughout the state so they can do their local areas.  
6 Let me just plug the video in at this point, and you can see  
7 what we have accomplished.

8 (Video Played.)

9 MR. HARDY: That was outstanding. That is a good  
10 PSA. It is outstanding.

11 MR. FORSTALL: Thank you.

12 MR. HARDY: Outstanding.

13 MR. FORSTALL: We are very excited about this  
14 program. We do believe that it is going to open up a lot of  
15 doors for people to join and become involved and become a  
16 Florida Relay Business Partner.

17 Now, with that, I have one more video that we  
18 produced, and it is for the equipment distribution program.  
19 And I would like to go ahead and show that. This video is nine  
20 minutes long, and this video is specifically about the  
21 equipment distribution program. We can't be everywhere.  
22 Sometimes we will be able to use it and send this out to people  
23 that want more information about the FTRI program. They will  
24 be able to view this and it gives them instructions on what to  
25 do to get the equipment.

1 (Video played.)

2 MR. FORSTALL: That's it. I appreciate you giving me  
3 the time to show you both of these videos.

4 MS. SALAK: Thank you. It was interesting. I do  
5 have one question. Do you work with AARP at all?

6 MR. FORSTALL: We have in the past, and we do intend  
7 to work with them again.

8 MS. SALAK: I was just curious, because it just seems  
9 they have multiple resources.

10 MR. FORSTALL: Once we get this business kit going,  
11 we believe this is going to open the door to a lot of  
12 businesses who maybe at one time have been hesitant to work  
13 with us. And we feel this will help us get our foot in the  
14 door.

15 MS. SALAK: Any other questions?

16 We have been doing this just about 55 minutes now,  
17 and the court reporters probably need a break to get regrouped.  
18 So let's take a 10 or 15-minute break. Depending on if we all  
19 get back here in 10 minutes, we will start in 10 minutes,  
20 otherwise we'll go 15. Thanks.

21 (Brief recess.)

22 MS. SALAK: Are we ready? We are going to start  
23 again. We are going to have a presentation by Mr. Bill  
24 Dickens, and it is on Lifeline. Lifeline is a program that is  
25 offered to give customers with below certain economic levels

1 breaks in their prices for telecommunications service. We are  
2 trying to promote outreach of the Lifeline program. We thought  
3 that this group as a whole could aid in that, in helping spread  
4 the word to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

5 I gave you two -- you have yellow flyers on your  
6 desks. Those are flyers that are put out by the Commission.  
7 One you have is in English and the other is in Spanish. But I  
8 will let Mr. Dickens tell you the ins and outs of the program,  
9 and I will turn it over to him.

10 Bill.

11 MR. DICKENS: Good afternoon to everyone. Let me,  
12 first of all, apologize for something that I wanted to do. My  
13 eight-year-old daughter is proficient in signing, and she was  
14 going to give daddy some lessons over the weekend. However, I  
15 got tied up with some other things, and as a result I am unable  
16 to sign a few things she was going to show me. But I promise  
17 that if I get this opportunity in the future, I will follow the  
18 instructions by my delightful daughter and do that. So, please  
19 accept my apologies for that.

20 As Beth indicated, I am here today to just provide  
21 some basic background information about this special  
22 telecommunications program known as Lifeline. And to do that,  
23 what I would like to do for the next 10 or 15 minutes is to  
24 look at the program by basically answering -- posing and  
25 answering five basic questions. The kind of questions that any

1 kind of investigative reporter would do in covering a story,  
2 that is, you know, what, who, where, when, why. So those are  
3 the five basic questions that we will be posing and looking for  
4 specific answers regarding how Lifeline works.

5           Let's look at the first question. And if everyone  
6 has a copy of the handout, I trust you do. If not, there are  
7 some more over here on the table. First of all, what is  
8 Lifeline? That is the question which is, obviously, most  
9 important for people who have no prior knowledge about  
10 Lifeline.

11           And as we see from the presentation, Lifeline, first  
12 of all, is a special telecommunications subsidy designed to  
13 assist low income subscribers in paying their local phone bill.  
14 So first and foremost, Lifeline subsidizes a part of a phone  
15 subscriber's phone bill. It does this by providing a credit of  
16 up to \$12 on a qualified subscriber's phone bill which includes  
17 a federal credit of \$8.50 and a matching credit of \$3.50 from  
18 their telephone company. And the sum 8.50 plus 3.50 is what  
19 gives us the amount of \$12.

20           Now, in addition to Lifeline there is a program that  
21 is known as Link-up. And Link-up, a companion federal program,  
22 provides a 50 percent reduction in the telephone service  
23 hook-up charge, up to a maximum of \$30. So if an individual  
24 does not have a telephone, this Link-up program is the program  
25 that enables one to actually have a significant part of their

1 phone bill costs defrayed in an amount of up to 50 percent.

2           Now, lastly, Lifeline and Link-up is only limited to  
3 one phone line in the home. This is important because,  
4 obviously, some homes have several or multiple lines in the  
5 home. But in order to receive a Lifeline or Link-up subsidy,  
6 it will only just go to one line and that is typically the  
7 primary line.

8           Question two, why does Lifeline exist? Reliable  
9 telephone service is important for individuals to conduct their  
10 day-to-day activities. Studies have recently shown that  
11 households with lower income are less likely to have phone  
12 service. Since income is an important barrier for local phone  
13 access, a significant segment of the U.S. population will  
14 remain disconnected from the benefits of phone service.  
15 Therefore, Lifeline is part of the Federal Universal Service  
16 Program designed to enable low income households to afford  
17 basic local telephone service.

18           In short, Lifeline exists because we have found that  
19 income can serve as an obstacle or barrier. So by offering  
20 this subsidy that promotes affordability, and in the process of  
21 promoting affordability, that means that more individuals will  
22 remain connected on the system.

23           Question three, who is eligible for Lifeline  
24 benefits? Eligibility for both Lifeline and Link-up is  
25 determined by subscriber enrollment in any one of the following



1 means-tested programs, means-tested or income-based programs.  
2 Now, these programs that are in effect for Floridians consist  
3 of the following six. First of all, the temporary assistance  
4 to needy families, or TANF for short, T-A-N-F; secondly,  
5 supplemental security income, or SSI; third, food stamps;  
6 fourth, Medicaid; fifth, Federal Public Housing, Section 8;  
7 and, finally, sixth, Low Income Home Energy Assistance or  
8 LIHEAP.

9           Now, in addition to the above-mentioned six programs,  
10 phone subscribers who reside in BellSouth's Florida territory  
11 with an annual income at or below 125 percent of the federal  
12 poverty guidelines also qualify for Lifeline.

13           Consumers meeting any of the previously mentioned  
14 criteria are eligible for Lifeline assistance even if phone  
15 service has been previously disconnected due to unpaid bills.  
16 In addition, the phone company can require the customer to make  
17 payment arrangements over a period of four months for the  
18 outstanding local portion of the bill. Any outstanding long  
19 distance charges may require participation in toll blocking.

20           The company cannot deny Lifeline service to qualified  
21 customers because of unpaid long distance bills.

22           Now, there are two additional programs that are also  
23 available to help defray basic telephone costs. First, the  
24 FCC's recent Tribal Lands Order makes basic phone service more  
25 affordable for native Americans. Effective October 1, 2000,

1 eligible applicants living on federally recognized native  
2 American reservations can receive an additional credit of up to  
3 \$25 to reduce the monthly rate for local service to no less  
4 than one dollar inclusive of the subscriber line charge.

5           Also, subscribers who no longer qualify for Lifeline  
6 can obtain temporary assistance through Transitional Lifeline  
7 Assistance, a state program that provides a 30 percent  
8 reduction in the monthly flat rate for basic residential  
9 service. A subscriber seeking this service can receive the  
10 subsidy for one year from the date the subscriber ceases to be  
11 qualified for Lifeline.

12           The 2002 Florida Legislature passed legislation  
13 aimed at augmenting eligibility criteria for Lifeline. The  
14 bill would set Lifeline eligibility at 125 percent of the  
15 federal poverty guidelines. If the bill becomes law, more  
16 phone subscribers would be eligible for Lifeline benefits.

17           Next question. How can an eligible consumer sign up  
18 for Lifeline benefits? Eligible subscribers can receive the  
19 credits by simply contacting their phone company and indicating  
20 they meet eligibility standards and want to participate in the  
21 Lifeline and Link-up programs. The phone company establishes  
22 eligibility by verifying the subscriber's enrollment in one of  
23 the prior mentioned programs.

24           Now, in addition, the Office of the Public Counsel is  
25 ready to help phone subscribers in BellSouth's territory obtain

1 Lifeline service.

2           Now, last but certainly not least, when can an  
3 eligible consumer start receiving Lifeline benefits? Phone  
4 subscribers can start receiving Lifeline benefits immediately  
5 after the phone company has confirmed their eligibility status.  
6 To ensure speedy processing of a Lifeline request, it is  
7 recommended that the subscriber's income support documents are  
8 current and readily available to the company.

9           In conclusion, there are three things I would like to  
10 leave with this audience today. First, access to safe and  
11 reliable telephone service should not be a function of consumer  
12 income. Secondly, Lifeline is important because it enables a  
13 significant portion of local phone costs to be defrayed. And,  
14 finally, Lifeline not only promotes affordability, but also  
15 ensures that all subscribers can enjoy the benefits of being  
16 connected to the telecommunications network.

17           Thank you very much. This concludes my portion of my  
18 verbal comments. At this time I will be more than happy to  
19 answer any questions that anyone may have from the audience or  
20 from the bench.

21           MS. SALAK: Chris.

22           MR. WAGNER: Yes, I have a question. I think it is a  
23 great program, but my question is suppose the (inaudible) 50  
24 percent long distance carrier, they have to apply and get a 50  
25 percent (inaudible) with the long distance call, will they

1 still qualify for the program?

2 MR. DICKENS: For the long distance?

3 MS. SALAK: If they have a discount for long  
4 distance, do they still qualify for the program?

5 MR. DICKENS: Provided that the subscriber simply  
6 meets those income-based criteria, then eligibility is still  
7 open. Of course, Lifeline is targeted specifically in terms of  
8 providing assistance for local charges. So as long as that is  
9 met, then you are definitely eligible and can qualify. So I  
10 would just recommend that one would just contact Sprint,  
11 provide the necessary documentation that you do meet that  
12 criteria, and then the service would be initiated at that time.

13 MR. WAGNER: Thank you.

14 MR. DICKENS: You're welcome.

15 MS. SALAK: Robert had the next question or  
16 statement.

17 MR. GIUNTOLI: I want to clarify. It is a very  
18 simple process. Sprint has a contract with the state, and we  
19 put in the 50 percent reduction for all long distance calls and  
20 we do that in-house, the reduction before we send out the bill.  
21 So the two would be in the same bill and that would be fine.

22 MR. HARDY: Okay. You're talking about eligibility  
23 for SSDI? SSDI, the disability insurance for social security.  
24 Some people are getting \$800 a month for that as opposed to  
25 some people who are on SSI get \$500 a month. So how can you

1 determine for us who would be eligible?

2 MR. DICKENS: Well, I am only aware of eligibility as  
3 set by SSI. I am aware about the distinction between the two.  
4 However, for purposes of the FCC that has basically provided  
5 the default criteria for states like Florida to operate from,  
6 SSI is the criteria that is used to see if an eligible  
7 subscriber meets that particular income threshold. But it is a  
8 very good question, probably something that should be addressed  
9 at a future level.

10 MR. HARDY: Because some people are on SSDI because  
11 of an injury or permanent disability, you know, maybe they are  
12 chronically ill or whatever. And that income is based on their  
13 job. So if at their job they were getting quite a bit of money  
14 per month, they wouldn't qualify because the expenses of the  
15 medicine that they may be on. So I am concerned. I want to  
16 make sure that it is fair and equitable, you know, there is  
17 equity.

18 MR. DICKENS: A point well taken. I concur with your  
19 concerns. However, given the way in which Lifeline is  
20 currently set up, that particular scenario would be one that  
21 would not be currently covered, because it only looks at SSI.  
22 Unless SSI is flexible enough to accommodate for those  
23 particular situations you just described, but my understanding  
24 is that it does not.

25 MS. SALAK: Any more questions?

1 MR. HARDY: No.

2 MS. SALAK: Thank you. And, again, the presentation  
3 made by Mr. Dickens today is to help in the outreach. We are  
4 trying to make a concerted effort to spread the word about  
5 Lifeline so that people can take advantage of it.

6 Thank you, Bill. Appreciate it.

7 MR. DICKENS: Thank you.

8 MS. SALAK: We are going to quickly talk about the  
9 PSC's website now. You should have two pieces of paper in  
10 front of you, one that talks about proposed relay web page and  
11 the other says filing an on-line complaint.

12 We had committed that we would try to make the  
13 complaint process a little easier at the Commission to make a  
14 relay complaint. What we were able to do was add relay as a  
15 category. When you go into the complaint process it is one of  
16 your choices that you can pick under telecommunications is  
17 relay. And that is what this is trying to do, the on-line  
18 complaint process is trying to show you. These would be the  
19 different screens that would come up. But, first of all, you  
20 would have to actually choose relay.

21 If you are familiar with our complaint process at  
22 all, this is what you would have to do. And we were wondering  
23 -- I think that -- this is probably the best we can do from our  
24 complaint process point of view, because they want it all to  
25 feed into our complaint system. So, anyway, this is to let you

1 know now relay is a choice that you have out there. Do you  
2 have any questions? Yes.

3 MR. HARDY: This is not good for the grassroots. It  
4 is not good for the grassroots. The language, it is too  
5 legalese. It is too academic. It needs to be separated for  
6 the people in the community. Do you know how many people in  
7 the State of Florida? Their literacy rate is very low. This  
8 is not -- this is causing people to not want to file complaints  
9 because of the terminology that is on this complaint screen.

10 MS. SALAK: Well, this is only one way that they  
11 have. I mean, they can file a complaint with Sprint. They can  
12 file a complaint with FTRI. They can call me on the phone.  
13 They can write me a letter, they can -- but this is just how to  
14 file it on-line. I mean, they can call you, tell you, and then  
15 you can tell me, or you can tell Sprint. There are lots of  
16 ways to do it. We were just trying to accommodate that people  
17 didn't know exactly if they went into our complaint system  
18 on-line, we were trying to accommodate where people might be  
19 able to find it easier to file a relay complaint if they were  
20 on line. I don't know. Yes.

21 MR. HARDY: I wanted to follow up. Most deaf people  
22 like face-to-face in order to complain. I can't take the place  
23 of them in this complaint. My plate is already full. I can't  
24 accept that kind of responsibility. I refer them to Sprint or  
25 FTRI, and then they don't follow it up because there is

1 language delays. I tell them, "I can't do it for you, you need  
2 to do it." And they are saying, "No, on the TTY the language  
3 is too difficult." I don't know, it's a problem. That's why  
4 you are not getting comments. I have stopped sending them on  
5 because that is not part of my job.

6 MS. SALAK: That is unfortunate, because I enjoy  
7 getting your e-mails.

8 MR. HARDY: My plate is full.

9 MS. SALAK: I understand that. I don't know how to  
10 get around that issue.

11 Yes, Andrew.

12 MR. BRENNEMAN: Excuse me, just for a second. For  
13 the record, this gentleman's name is Hardy. The court reporter  
14 referred to him as Mr. Harris.

15 MS. SALAK: Thank you for pointing that out. So,  
16 anyway --

17 MR. WAGNER: If I could make a comment regarding what  
18 Mr. Hardy said about filing these face-to-face, the discussion  
19 about (inaudible). We have deaf service centers and other  
20 service providers around the state that would be able to handle  
21 it. They are prepared to handle it and have them fill out  
22 paper work and advise them what to do. What we need to do is  
23 more of an outreach to let others know and the deaf community  
24 know that they can go to the centers and receive the assistance  
25 they need.



1 MS. SALAK: And get the help they need, great.

2 MR. HARDY: Mr. Hardy says excellent, perfect.

3 MS. SALAK: All right. The other item that Susan has  
4 been working on is that we are trying to update our web page  
5 for relay and the services that are provided. However, we find  
6 that, you know, we put a lot of information in there; we can  
7 put the phone numbers in there of how to get, you know, to  
8 relay, and we put a history in there about what has happened  
9 with TASA through the years. But we really wanted to make this  
10 useful, and I'm not sure how useful that is. We have the  
11 contacts in here for the advisory committee, and I think that  
12 is useful. And I think the history is interesting. But what  
13 we are really wondering is what you would like to see on the  
14 web page.

15 This is the Commission's web page. This is  
16 information. There are a lot of other web pages out there.  
17 FTRI is developing a web page. I'm sure some of your  
18 organizations have web pages, but we want to make this useful  
19 and helpful. And so we were hoping for a little input as to  
20 what we can put out there that would help. So, any ideas? And  
21 we can do links, and we can do all of that.

22 MR. WAGNER: I really like this.

23 MS. SALAK: Oh, do you like it? Good.

24 MR. WAGNER: Yeah. This is very helpful. Also, the  
25 contact names, one needs to be changed. There are some people

1 on there that are not supposed to be in there. There is some  
2 confusion on who the contact people are in the advisory  
3 committee. Like, for example, the deaf service center, the  
4 treasure coast, he is the secretary for Jerry Conner, who is  
5 the president of the Deaf Service Center Association. He is  
6 not really a committee member. Jerry will be the contact  
7 person.

8 MS. SALAK: Okay. Well, if you want to put any  
9 changes that you have in writing as far as the contact list, we  
10 will be glad to, you know, change anything on there; or if you  
11 think there are some organizations that we should be linking  
12 to, we will be glad to do that, too. But we just need your  
13 input on that to make it more useful. Yes.

14 MR. HARDY: On Page 7, Frank Slater, he's not dead  
15 yet. This person is still alive.

16 MS. SALAK: We said he's dead? How nice.

17 MR. HARDY: France Slazer -- Frank Slinger,  
18 S-L-I-N-G-E-R. He's passed away. S-L-A-T-E-R. He did not pass  
19 away. In this document it said that he had passed away. This  
20 is not true. I just talked to him last week, and he is still  
21 alive.

22 MS. SALAK: Well, that's good to hear. We did get a  
23 report of his death. But I am glad to here that he is living.  
24 That is an issued report, but we can -- we are glad that he is  
25 alive, though.

1 MR. HARDY: This is a sensitive document. So, I  
2 mean, if somebody raises this -- to my opinion, so. Someone  
3 asked me to read this, and I said, okay. And it was sensitive  
4 to him that this was printed in this way, and so I said, okay,  
5 I will bring it up to them, that's all.

6 MS. SALAK: I appreciate you doing that. I am just  
7 not quite sure what to do about it. We can definitely  
8 apologize to Mr. Slater. We can do that.

9 MR. HARDY: No problem.

10 MS. SALAK: All right. So any suggestions you  
11 have -- I mean, further suggestions on the web page and what we  
12 can do for it to improve it? Any links you can give us, any  
13 corrections to the contacts would be wonderful. Anything else?

14 MR. HARDY: Maybe you can put a link to FTRI Florida,  
15 can you do that?

16 MS. SALAK: I believe we have done that already, but  
17 we --

18 MR. HARDY: Like a logo, it would be easy for someone  
19 to read it and just click on it quickly.

20 MS. SALAK: Okay.

21 Robert?

22 MR. GIUNTOLI: I want to make sure that you see the  
23 Sprint relay web page, too. I feel that it is free for them to  
24 use as a resource and it has everything there. It is free to  
25 use if you want to get any ideas off of it.

1 MS. SALAK: And we can link to it, also?

2 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes, that would be great.

3 MS. SALAK: We did link to it already I am told. We  
4 have linked to it. Anything else we have linked to, Susan?  
5 Okay. We're linked to the statutes.

6 Okay. If you have any other further suggestions,  
7 please, just give it to Susan. She's been our point person on  
8 the web page, and we would appreciate that.

9 I wanted to have a brief discussion -- I know we want  
10 to go on and talk about some other items later, but just a  
11 brief discussion of what you are expecting from these advisory  
12 committee meetings. We can adjust the agendas to make it -- we  
13 want this to be useful and a good feedback, so what would you  
14 like to cover that we are not covering? What do you think we  
15 take too long on? Just ideas you may have for how to change  
16 these meetings to improve them.

17 MR. HARDY: I would like to have the agenda about a  
18 month ahead of time instead of a few days before. That is kind  
19 of a short notice. I would like them a month in advance. Can  
20 you distribute the agenda to my association? Can you send it  
21 to my association so I can get their input, and then I could  
22 bring it here to you? At the last minute I don't have enough  
23 time to do that. Our board meetings are every three months,  
24 and I would like to have it before I come here about a month in  
25 advance.

1 MS. SALAK: We can try. Definitely.

2 MR. HARDY: Okay. Thanks.

3 MR. WAGNER: I recall from the last meeting we had we  
4 talked about the possibility of moving the meeting to different  
5 locations so that the public could participate in the meeting.  
6 I just think that is really important for the community to be  
7 involved and be able to instruct their concerns to the  
8 committee.

9 MS. SALAK: Okay. Are the topics relevant, do you  
10 believe, or should we be changing the topics?

11 MR. WAGNER: Fine.

12 MR. HARDY: Just leave it. I think it is fine.

13 MS. SALAK: Okay. Jim? Susan? No? Any other  
14 suggestions on what we might do to change?

15 MR. HARDY: Not Mr. Harris, Mr. Hardy.

16 THE REPORTER: We need to stop so we can change it.  
17 Okay. No problem.

18 MS. SALAK: It's stopped, so you can get it done now.  
19 (Off the record.)

20 MS. SALAK: Yea. There we go.

21 So, all right, again, you know, we like your feedback  
22 on the meetings because we are telling you what we think is  
23 important, but I really would rather talk about what you think  
24 is important. And so if you have suggestions, e-mail them to  
25 us as you think of them and that will work, too. And then we

1 can just keep a log and get them ready.

2           There has also been a suggestion that we set up the  
3 meeting dates now as opposed to waiting. Because some of the  
4 meeting will be based on -- some of it will be availability of  
5 staff and other things that happen, it is difficult for us to  
6 do that in advance. However, if you give us a like a block of  
7 time or several days that are good for you, then I think that  
8 we could accommodate setting up the advisory committee now as  
9 opposed to, or at least, a broad area of time. I don't think  
10 we can pinpoint it today, but we can certainly do several days  
11 that I think we could do the meeting. So you would at least  
12 have it --

13           MR. HARDY: According to the law, how often do we  
14 have to meet every year?

15           MS. SALAK: Uhm.

16           MR. HARDY: According to the law, how often do we  
17 have to meet every year?

18           MS. SALAK: I am turning to my attorney, I don't  
19 know.

20           MS. BROWN: I don't know, either. I thought it was  
21 like once a quarter.

22           MS. SALAK: But we haven't been doing that.

23           MS. BROWN: Isn't that correct?

24           MR. HORTON: I don't think it states.

25           MS. BROWN: Not that frequently. I will check it

1 out.

2 MS. SALAK: We will check it out on a break, and then  
3 we can let you know after the break.

4 We are thinking about some dates because at the very  
5 end when we are talking about future topics, we will talk about  
6 those dates, too, and we'll get a Commission calendar and see  
7 how much we can narrow it down ourselves.

8 All right. I think -- if you don't have anymore  
9 suggestions about the meeting, at this point we are going to  
10 move on to the Sprint contract and start talking about that  
11 before we take a break.

12 Robert, did you want to make a presentation? Do you  
13 know how long your presentation will last?

14 MR. GIUNTOLI: About 10 or 15 minutes.

15 MS. SALAK: Okay. Just as an introduction, as you  
16 may remember, Sprint's contract was -- the first piece was for  
17 three years, and there were two one-year periods where we had  
18 to renew the contract for a total of five years. Sprint had to  
19 let us know by April 1st if they wanted to provide service to  
20 us again for next year. We have them for this coming year, but  
21 the year after. So they have told us that they want to provide  
22 that service. They are willing -- it is my understanding that  
23 they are willing to give us a toll-free number for VCO and  
24 E-Turbo; is that correct?

25 And then they have also made the request that they

1 would like to have us commit to the contract for the full  
2 two-year period instead of two one-year periods. And then that  
3 would involve getting some additional services for Internet  
4 relay and a CAPTEL trial, which we will see what Robert is  
5 going to discuss in his presentation. Well, we will see what  
6 Robert will discuss, and then we will talk about it further.

7 MR. GIUNTOLI: Can everyone see me okay? All right.  
8 Great. Good afternoon, everyone. It is a pleasure to be back  
9 here in Florida again. It is a nice day. In Texas we had a  
10 terrible lightning and thunderstorm. I was worried about  
11 missing the flight, but I got here fine.

12 I want to start out with some basic statistics. This  
13 is the most recent trends in the relay minutes. You will  
14 notice every month we have had an increase in the minutes of  
15 relay use, except for one month that happened. Last June we  
16 had a bit of a drop off. We don't really know the reason, you  
17 know, but in general, everything is very healthy, you will see.  
18 It is a good, you know, good trend showing.

19 This is a comparison of the number of calls and then  
20 the number of minutes. You will see there is a difference. In  
21 some months there is a decrease in the number of calls. It may  
22 be that people are staying on the call longer instead of making  
23 several calls -- separate calls. It is interesting, but the  
24 most important is the number of minutes, how long people are  
25 staying on the line to make their calls. This is just for



1 comparison information, and the efficiency, as well. Just kind  
2 of an FYI.

3 This is a breakdown of the types of calls per  
4 percentage that people are using TTY, voice, ASCII. It is a  
5 comparison of all the different categories. One year ago to  
6 just recently, January and February of the two years, 2001 to  
7 2002 comparison. This is an average of the Baudot TTY, because  
8 people are using Turbo Code. That has been a great change.  
9 Because people are changing over to Turbo Code, they see the  
10 benefit to it.

11 The computer use of ASCII, VCO for hard of hearing,  
12 that is increasing, as well. That is a good, good showing  
13 here. There is one challenge here. You will notice the voice,  
14 the ones that start with voice, hearing people making relay  
15 calls are going down. It is very interesting. It is something  
16 that we really need to analyze and see how we can improve that  
17 situation. Unfortunately, Florida is showing to have one of  
18 the lowest number of voice-initiated calls in the nation. An  
19 average around the country is 25 percent of the relay users are  
20 hearing initiated, but here it is only 13 percent. There is  
21 still quite a bit of a market out there that don't know about  
22 the relay, and this just shows to support that we need to  
23 continue that effort.

24 Are there any questions about this?

25 MS. SALAK: Why do you think the voice has gone down?

1 I mean, I am more concerned that it has gone down, than -- I  
2 would rather see growth, obviously. But it is even worse that  
3 it has gone down. No idea?

4 MR. GIUNTOLI: Really, we are finding it very  
5 strange. Florida is a very large state. A lot of people are  
6 moving into Florida. We have a lot of snowbirds, we have a lot  
7 of retirees. I don't know. I don't know. Do you have any  
8 idea?

9 MR. WAGNER: I agree with Robert, but I know the  
10 public that we serve is a lot of the elderly people that still  
11 are not aware of the programs, like the FTRI relay business  
12 partnership plan and with more outreach to the hearing  
13 population, the numbers should go up.

14 MR. GIUNTOLI: In some states with 711, the  
15 voice-initiated calls shot up, wow, from 25 percent, and it  
16 went up to like 27 percent in some states. Here, it is still  
17 low. It is something we really need to focus on in the near  
18 future.

19 Okay. This is something -- this is one of my  
20 favorite projects, the Spanish relay. It has grown. I need to  
21 tell you a little bit about part of it. Last November, I  
22 started a small project, just mail-outs, flyers, in Spanish to  
23 South Florida, to the South Florida community, posters, just as  
24 an experiment. Wow. We can count that word-of-mouth in that  
25 small community, in the Spanish-speaking community,

1 word-of-mouth just increased the number of use. And we think  
2 it is based in the Miami area, and we are working with the Deaf  
3 Service Bureau trying to get the flyers out, distributed, and  
4 we are looking at this increase right here. It is very  
5 interesting.

6 Starting right here, we had 1,200 calls, to right  
7 here we have over 5,700 calls. Do you have any questions about  
8 this?

9 MS. JONES: Is this from the Miami area? You  
10 inferred that. Is more of it happening in Miami?

11 MR. GIUNTOLI: The Spanish relay is available around  
12 the state, but this is just a small project that I did in  
13 distributing in the Miami area just to see what kind of impact  
14 it would make. And we have noticed quite an impact from doing  
15 that.

16 As Beth explained to you, we have a one-year  
17 extension. We have a one and a one. And I want to propose to  
18 see if you are interested in signing the contract to have this  
19 new technology available, as well. It is a committed,  
20 dedicated VCO toll-free line. We have 11 call centers, 2000  
21 operators. And not every VCO operator -- not every operator  
22 can make a VCO call, so -- not every operator makes a VCO call  
23 on a regular basis, so we have made a solution. We have made a  
24 gateway where all VCO calls would go through the same group of  
25 operators. And they will process VCO calls all the time all

1 day long, and they will become the experts on it. We want to  
2 see if that will make it easier for hard of hearing people to  
3 get the support and assistance to make the calls efficient.  
4 They will have to dial a separate 800 number, and it will go  
5 directly to the operators who are trained specifically in VCO,  
6 and that will -- well, we have gotten feedback from the  
7 consumers that they want that. So we would like to offer that  
8 because the customers want it.

9           Do you have any questions? That is something we can  
10 provide to the state for no additional cost. Okay.

11           The person using 711, those numbers will still be in  
12 existence, and they can use them for VCO calls. It is just  
13 optional for those people if we had the new number. This other  
14 new technology that Sprint is offering to the state for no  
15 additional fee, E-Turbo. We've had Turbo Code. Now this new  
16 technology, E-Turbo. It means an enhanced Turbo Code. This  
17 big long summary put together means that Sprint will work  
18 together with the technology with where the person is. The  
19 consumer will press one button. They will enter the hearing  
20 person's number, and it will shoot off directly. It is an  
21 Ultratec device.

22           We can just push the one button, that one person's  
23 telephone number, and it will shoot directly to the hearing  
24 person. Our relay operator will get the information directly  
25 before it connects to the other person. It sounds confusing, I

1 think, but it eliminates some of the steps.

2 MR. HARDY: That is not clear.

3 MR. GIUNTOLI: Hold on. Let me go back. The old  
4 TTYs, you had to dial in 711. It rang a few times. The  
5 operator answered, asked for the number. Hi, I would like to  
6 call Dr. Smith at number whatever, GA. And the operator would  
7 make that phone call. This new technology, I press one button.  
8 It is the doctor's number in the device already. I press it,  
9 it goes. The operator gets the information I want to call the  
10 doctor, and it immediately goes to the doctor. It's as if the  
11 relay is not there. It is speed dialing because it eliminates  
12 some of the steps. The relay center gets your preferences,  
13 whether you want VCO, what kind do you want, before you make  
14 the contact to the consumers.

15 And if you want to add anything to the TTY, all the  
16 information will be added to it, and it will be directed to the  
17 relay center.

18 MR. HARDY: Will it work on my TTY?

19 MR. GIUNTOLI: He asked if it would work on  
20 everyone's TTY. It is only available right now in the Pro --  
21 in the Pro-Ultratec new devices that are put out, Pro80 Gold  
22 new devices. It started April 1st. Anyone who has a Pro80,  
23 that device, it will work. Ultratec is planning to add it to  
24 4425s, to their other TTYs in future years in phases. But for  
25 now, they are using the enhanced Turbo Code in the Pro80s that

1 they distribute, Pro80 TTYs. For now it is working in that one  
2 model of TTY. In the future, it is supposed to be put into the  
3 various TTYs that Ultratec distributes. Okay. Is that clear?

4 MR. WAGNER: I have a question to point out.  
5 (Inaudible.) Is the TTY equipment compatible with what they  
6 are offering? Maybe the FTRI center get to upgrade or when  
7 they order the new TTY.

8 MS. SALAK: James, do you want to add to that?

9 MR. FORSTALL: Yes, we just renewed a contract with  
10 an additional year with Ultratec, so it will be another year  
11 before we can consider these options.

12 MS. SALAK: Well, Robert, are you planning on -- this  
13 would be available right away if we decided to renew the  
14 contract, or are you going to give this to us no matter what?

15 MR. GIUNTOLI: We could start it -- we started it  
16 April 1st, last week. It is already available to those  
17 consumers who have purchased TTYs on their own. If they don't  
18 have the Pro80, it will be available in the models that they  
19 are planning to distribute when it is added in phases into  
20 those devices in later years.

21 MR. FORSTALL: I haven't been told about that. Thank  
22 you.

23 MS. SALAK: So it is a free service that you are  
24 offering now.

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. We are offering it nationwide.

1 So Florida is one of our consumers, so it is being offered to  
2 them free.

3 MR. HARDY: So that service is available. But if  
4 FTRI does not continue providing that equipment, it isn't a  
5 benefit to us if we don't have the equipment that accesses what  
6 is available.

7 MR. GIUNTOLI: It will benefit to the people who  
8 purchase their TTYs on their own. If they buy their own  
9 equipment, it will be of benefit to them. If not, they may  
10 have to wait a little bit longer until the 4425s are equipped  
11 with them at the Ultratec manufacturers. It is very new  
12 technology. I'm sure FTRI, Sprint, and everyone else is going  
13 to have to catch up with this new technology.

14 MS. SALAK: Robert, you mentioned if someone buys  
15 their own equipment. How many -- do you have any estimate of  
16 how many people, usage in the state of Florida of relay,  
17 actually buy their own equipment as opposed to getting it from  
18 FTRI?

19 MR. GIUNTOLI: No. No.

20 MS. SALAK: Do you all know?

21 MR. WAGNER: I could say that the majority of the  
22 people who use TTY receive it from FTRI. While a lot of them  
23 still own their own TTY, they are very old models, not the new  
24 models. So if they live in the State of Florida and they have  
25 the advantage to get a free TTY, they will do that first.

1 MS. SALAK: That makes sense to me. I just didn't  
2 know if people were out there buying them or not.

3 MR. GIUNTOLI: The people in Florida with TTYs, you  
4 know, and nationally as well, 90 percent of the TTYs in the  
5 country are made by Ultratec, so that technology will be  
6 available in TTYs that FTRI distributes at some later date  
7 eventually. Okay.

8 There is another new -- this is not in the letter  
9 that I sent to you, Beth. This is very new. It was a press  
10 release just from last week. It is very new information.  
11 Sprint has decided to provide video relay. We will be the  
12 first in the relay industry to do that. We are going to have  
13 video relay nationwide for no additional charge to the states.  
14 We will be providing web access for every state. For example,  
15 Florida could offer WWW. -- oh, I have no idea how we could do  
16 it, Floridarelayvrs.com. And that would be accessed to the web  
17 where they could sign to our operators and use that instead of  
18 our TTYs. That will reach a new consumer base, the very  
19 grassroots. And I have seen a lot of deaf people who do not  
20 use TTYs because of their typing, they don't have the English  
21 capabilities, they prefer to use sign, and this will open the  
22 doors for these people.

23 For example, I have a very good friend of mine, he is  
24 a mechanic. He is a car mechanic. He is incredibly skilled in  
25 his trade, but I was surprised to find out he never makes a TTY



1 call. He refuses to. This he would use. This video call he  
2 could call to any, you know, place that he needs to. And he  
3 would use the VRS. They are using the VRS in Texas right now,  
4 and they are addicted. They are addicted. ASL is my first  
5 language. I can sign as quickly as you people can speak. It  
6 is really a realtime conversation. It is not so much of the  
7 lag time that we experience.

8 MR. WAGNER: You said it is free to the states, but  
9 as a customer TTY calls relay compared to, what are the costs?

10 MR. GIUNTOLI: A customer needs to have the regular  
11 equipment, a computer. Many people have a computer now. They  
12 need to have a webcam. It's very cheap right now. You can buy  
13 that for, you know, \$19, \$29, \$40, a good one. They need to  
14 have the software for meetings. They need to have high-speed  
15 access Internet. That is the one thing that a consumer would  
16 purchase own their own, would have to be to get the high-speed  
17 access. Comcast from different purchasers. The cable  
18 companies, hook-up with them, and then they would be able to  
19 access it. Some states such as Texas, Washington, they  
20 distribute free webcams as part of their TTY distribution  
21 programs, and it sits on top of the computer. It is very  
22 cost-effective. You know, it's \$30 or \$40 each for each  
23 device.

24 MR. HARDY: I would like to talk about that web  
25 relay. I made a web call -- video call recently. It felt like

1 I wanted to take my TTY and put it away so I could just express  
2 myself so comfortably with sign. I was worried that the person  
3 would not be able to read me. I was able to just express  
4 myself fluently with my friend, go back and forth. It was just  
5 like being face-to-face. It was wonderful. My concern was the  
6 speed, the broadband. I live on a farm. We don't have access.  
7 It made me so depressed. If I had it at home, I would be using  
8 that video relay.

9 MR. GIUNTOLI: This is an option. This is a new  
10 option for the sophisticated consumer, in addition to the  
11 available services we have.

12 MR. WAGNER: One question. What is the quality of  
13 the video relay?

14 MR. GIUNTOLI: Same. Do you want to explain about  
15 that, Andrew? Do you want to explain how that --

16 MR. LANGE: Are you talking about the quality of the  
17 video or quality of the interpreter?

18 My name is Andy Lange. I am with Sprint sales. Do  
19 you want me to sign? The FCC has waived all requirements for  
20 video relay at this point, and I think that is supposed to last  
21 for about 18 months. However, in the mandates that they have  
22 written previously, it requires an interpreter level of four  
23 and five for NAD certification and RIDC ICT level. So that is  
24 the level. The quality of the video depends on your high-speed  
25 access, so --

1 MR. WAGNER: I just want to point out that is a major  
2 part in Florida is the quality of the interpreter. You know,  
3 we have some so-called interpreters without any certification  
4 doing the work and quality of the service -- (inaudible) have  
5 the best qualified interpreter.

6 MR. GIUNTOLI: So, again, this is available on a  
7 nationwide basis. It is part of the program. Sprint has its  
8 own web page.

9 MR. HARDY: What is the cost? Is it the same cost  
10 per minute?

11 MR. GIUNTOLI: No additional cost.

12 MR. HARDY: If I call relay, I speak to whom, if I  
13 call relay?

14 MR. LANGE: The mechanism is in place where the  
15 National Exchange Carriers Association will be reimbursing for  
16 VRS costs at this point. And, again, as I said, it has been  
17 waived for 18 months. What will happen after 18 months, we  
18 don't know. But at this point, NECA will reimburse for video  
19 relay minutes at \$9.61 a minute. So what we are proposing is  
20 that we will establish a website with the Florida access  
21 address. It will be [floridavrs.com](http://floridavrs.com) or whatever, but you will  
22 have your own state access. It will have your Florida state  
23 page and you access the VRS service through that point. And  
24 there is a cost in establishing that, but we are not passing  
25 that on to the state. We are providing that for free as part

1 of the service.

2 MR. HARDY: If I want to use that service now, who do  
3 I call? What direction do I go in?

4 MR. LANGE: There is an organization that is  
5 providing VRS at this point. It is called CSD, and they are  
6 based out of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. You can use them now  
7 if you want. And when we get the Florida website established,  
8 you will be able to use that anytime you want, as well.

9 The advantage to Florida to having your own website  
10 here is that we will provide you with all of the statistical  
11 information, the number of calls, how long the calls are, and  
12 so forth. So you can use that as a benchmark 18 months from  
13 now when the FCC makes a decision on how this is going to be  
14 reimbursed.

15 Using the national CSD VRS right now the state  
16 receives nothing. You will get no reports at all. But with  
17 us, we will provide you with monthly reporting on number of  
18 minutes, number of calls and so forth.

19 There is a time limit on the service. I believe it  
20 starts at 8 A.M. to approximately 9:00 or 10:00 P.M., and there  
21 is limited hours on the weekends. There is a time limit, and  
22 that's because they're using --

23 MR. HARDY: Why?

24 MR. LANGE: Why? Interpreters issues. And the FCC  
25 has waived all requirements, so everyone is pretty much free to

1 establish what they want.

2 MR. HARDY: Okay.

3 MR. WAGNER: I have one question.

4 MR. LANGE: Okay.

5 MR. WAGNER: I think it is a great idea, but how are  
6 you going to make any money (inaudible).

7 MR. LANGE: Well, remember that NECA is reimbursing  
8 \$9.61 a minute, so that helps pay for a lot of the costs.

9 MR. WAGNER: Where do they get the money?

10 MR. LANGE: Do you want me to go into that, NECA?

11 Okay. The National Exchange Carriers Association is an  
12 association of all the long distance phone companies, and they  
13 pay in their share based on their market share. NECA is  
14 normally -- has been reimbursing for interstate relay. So each  
15 phone company that provides relay has their own national relay  
16 service. So the FCC has authorized NECA to pay for the VRS,  
17 video relay service.

18 MR. FORSTALL: When did this go into effect?

19 MR. LANGE: When was what?

20 MR. FORSTALL: The NECA paying for --

21 MR. LANGE: Oh, when did that start? Actually, it  
22 started about two or three months ago, and it has been going on  
23 now. It is supposed to be for 18 months. So I think what the  
24 FCC will do is they will put out their notice for proposed  
25 rulemaking process. And when they go through all of that, then

1 they will make a final decision on how, what, and where this  
2 whole thing is going to work.

3 MR. FORSTALL: How many states have joined in since  
4 that time?

5 MR. LANGE: Okay. Previously the FCC did not waive  
6 the mandates. So what happened was Texas and Washington state  
7 were the only two states in the nation that was willing to pay  
8 for the service themselves. So they established VRS services  
9 in those states. Now, with the FCC waiving the mandates, I  
10 think all 50 states are jumping into this. And at Sprint, we  
11 are offering not only the service, but also the website and the  
12 monthly reportings that you will get. And I think the state  
13 will find that very beneficial, because from all indications  
14 this will fly. It will take off. And the state is going to  
15 have to deal with it sooner or later, and it is very helpful if  
16 you have the raw data in hand when that happens, and that is  
17 what we are proposing to deliver.

18 MR. FORSTALL: Okay.

19 MS. SALAK: Anyone else have any questions for  
20 Robert? If not, we are going to give the interpreters and --

21 MR. HARDY: I have a question, but not related to  
22 that. I have something else; is that okay?

23 MS. SALAK: Can we take a quick break for the  
24 interpreters and court reporters and come back and you can ask  
25 as many questions as you like?

1 MR. HARDY: Okay. Great.

2 MS. SALAK: Let's try to come back in ten minutes.

3 (Brief recess.)

4 MS. SALAK: Are we ready? Steve, do you want to ask  
5 Robert some more questions?

6 MR. HARDY: I have a question.

7 MS. SALAK: Didn't let him off the hook.

8 MR. GIUNTOLI: Are we going to start with his  
9 questions, or do you want me to finish my presentation, a  
10 little bit about this stuff?

11 MR. HARDY: That was my question. Go ahead. Okay.

12 MR. GIUNTOLI: Beth asked me to briefly explain about  
13 the proposal that we are making to the state. As she explained  
14 to you, we have sent a letter that it is our purpose to extend  
15 the ten years. If he gives us the two additional years instead  
16 of the one plus one, we are willing to throw in these two  
17 functions. We will be providing Internet relay. People can  
18 access the web, make relay calls. Okay. That is easy enough,  
19 right?

20 And then CAPTEL. Has anyone heard of CAPTEL before?  
21 James has. This is new technology. Wow. It is an amazing new  
22 technology. It is part of the VCO. The person who speaks and  
23 reads but can't hear the other person on the other line, with  
24 CAPTEL you will be able to hear and read what the other person  
25 is saying. It is better than VCO. It will help hard of

1 hearing people understand what is being said on the phone, so  
2 that they can listen and read to help them -- help their  
3 understanding of what they are hearing. It is a new  
4 technology, new equipment. Okay. I will keep it short.

5 MR. WAGNER: Is it similar to VCO?

6 MR. GIUNTOLI: CAPTEL requires special equipment. If  
7 Florida is interested we will have a nine-month trial where we  
8 can pick some people to try out that service, and they will  
9 make a report to the state about how they like it, whether the  
10 state should consider it as part of the new contract.

11 MR. BRENNEMAN: If I may, please. If I may elaborate  
12 just a little bit about the product itself. It looks the same  
13 as a regular telephone without any keyboard. It has a screen  
14 on the phone. You make a regular call. It automatically  
15 connects with the operator without you having to dial into any  
16 center. If you want to call your friend, the system  
17 automatically hooks you up with the operator, and then that  
18 operator will speak, and you will listen to the voice of the  
19 person who is speaking, and you will be watching a TV that is  
20 like closed-caption, and you are hearing at the same time, that  
21 kind of double benefit of reading and hearing at the same time.  
22 That experience. It is a really fascinating new technology for  
23 the late deafened, hard-of-hearing person that has speech  
24 ability.

25 We are proposing a nine-month trial so that we can



1 choose a few participants from around the State of Florida, and  
2 each person will receive two CAPTEL phones; one for their home  
3 and the other one for their office just as an experiment. No  
4 cost to the state. It is a project that we are working with  
5 Ultratec. Very excited about this product. It is a very  
6 breakthrough kind of technology.

7 MR. HARDY: If I talk on the phone -- I don't have to  
8 say GA.

9 MR. BRENNEMAN: No, you could talk to any other  
10 friend. You can have a regular conversation.

11 MR. HARDY: I can say hi, Beth, this is Stephen, I  
12 don't have to say GA?

13 MR. BRENNEMAN: There is no interaction -- the relay  
14 service has -- the operator -- there is no interaction with the  
15 operator with this new device. You don't have to interact with  
16 the operator at all using this device. It is amazing.

17 MR. HARDY: How does it work? And what is the time  
18 delay?

19 MR. GIUNTOLI: The operator will use -- in their own  
20 screen will speak into it, and it will translate out into the  
21 digital representations so you don't have to type. You use the  
22 voice-to-text technology so it picks up the speed quite a bit.

23 MR. HARDY: Okay. But it is almost like rapid speed.  
24 Like you are talking, and it is typing very fast.

25 MR. BRENNEMAN: Yes, it is almost the same thing.

1 That group of operators will have special training on that  
2 equipment so they will be able to recognize the voice, your  
3 exact speech-to-text. I would say it would be 99 percent  
4 accurate. It is amazing.

5 MR. HARDY: What about gender? Do I know if it is a  
6 woman's voice?

7 MR. BRENNEMAN: You are talking. The operator just  
8 rephrases the sentence, restates the sentences from the voice  
9 that is talking. So you have full control of the call.

10 MR. HARDY: That is amazing.

11 MR. BRENNEMAN: One clarification. One  
12 clarification. Thank you, Andy. The operator doesn't rephrase  
13 the voice; she restates exact words in the communication.

14 MR. FORSTALL: Will this technology work with any VCO  
15 phone or will it have to be a special phone from Ultratec?

16 MR. BRENNEMAN: It has to be the special phone from  
17 Ultratec, the CAPTEL.

18 MS. KING: And will this special phone need any kind  
19 of special phone line or just a basic phone line?

20 MR. BRENNEMAN: Just a regular phone line, just a  
21 regular hook-up.

22 MR. GIUNTOLI: The idea is for senior citizens,  
23 hard-of-hearing people who are afraid to use relay because of  
24 the procedures that are involved. You call the special number,  
25 and having to say GA, and having to deal with having a third

1 party involved. This eliminates all of that. You don't have  
2 to deal with a third party. You don't have to deal with a  
3 special number. No special process. You just speak to the  
4 other person on a regular telephone, and then you have the  
5 option of reading in addition to hearing what the person is  
6 saying.

7 MR. HARDY: Wow.

8 MR. WAGNER: You're talking about picking maybe 200  
9 people in the State of Florida to participate in your trial.  
10 But how will you pick the people? Who would you contact to  
11 find those people?

12 MR. BRENNEMAN: We would work with the State of  
13 Florida and with FTRI to help identify 200 good applicants for  
14 the trial. A nine-month trial would be an easy thing to do.

15 MR. HARDY: I want to try it, because I am afraid to  
16 talk with my own voice. And I feel that I do want to talk on  
17 the phone, but sometimes I feel afraid. And I can't hear.  
18 Even when I put it up to me, it sounds silent, and I hear my  
19 own voice and it is very confusing. But this sounds like I  
20 could hear my own voice and I would be connected. I hate to  
21 feel dependent on other people to make phone calls for me. I  
22 want to be independent. This is a wonderful idea. This is  
23 amazing. I am going to be the first person in line to sign up  
24 for that phone.

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: I know we are giving you a lot of new

1 information today, but the technology is just exploding. In my  
2 personal opinion, video relay and CAPTEL, those are the future.  
3 Those two things, those two technologies are the future. They  
4 are the biggest things going on right now.

5 MS. BROWN: The technology is the computer  
6 recognizing the voice and translating it into text, is that  
7 what is happening, the computer in the phone?

8 MR. GIUNTOLI: Okay. The equipment at the operator's  
9 work station, right now the operator must type at above 60  
10 words per minute. Some people speak 120 words per minute.  
11 Now, we have this technology where the operator instead of  
12 typing will just speak into the computer, and the computer will  
13 send the text onto your equipment at your home. More realtime  
14 conversation.

15 MR. FORSTALL: When I tested the equipment last  
16 summer, there was about an 80, 85 percent accuracy. What is it  
17 now? Has it improved?

18 MR. BRENNEMAN: 95 to 99 percent.

19 THE INTERPRETER: I'm sorry, I can't -- the  
20 interpreter can't see Andrew's hand. The interpreter can't see  
21 to voice for you.

22 MR. BRENNEMAN: Oh, I'm so sorry. Ultratec, we are  
23 working very closely with them in the demonstration to show  
24 that CAPTEL is about 98 to 99 percent accurate.

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: Thank you.

1           MR. HARDY: I'm stunned. The technology, I am so  
2 stunned. Wow. I'm lucky to be alive today. This is  
3 wonderful.

4           MS. SALAK: We will be working with Sprint on their  
5 new contract or deciding whether or not we are going to use  
6 Sprint again, and then we will have to make a decision whether  
7 or not we are going to extend it for the two-year period in  
8 order to get those trials. And that is something that we will  
9 be going to agenda on probably with the FTRI budget and the  
10 members of the advisory committee. That will be one of the  
11 things that we would address. Because as it currently stands,  
12 our contract would need an amendment to do that, so we will  
13 have to write a recommendation on that.

14           MR. HARDY: I have a comment. Do we have any  
15 influence? Do we have any input in this discussion or just  
16 does the Commission make a decision regarding this for the  
17 hearing-impaired consumers, or do we have a role in making the  
18 decision? Do we have any input in the process?

19           MS. SALAK: Right now you can give us an opinion on  
20 what you would like to see happen, and we can express that in  
21 our recommendation. And the other thing is that you can  
22 certainly show up at agenda and discuss what you believe should  
23 happen. You can come before the Commissioners and speak and  
24 give your input.

25           MR. HARDY: I would like that, because it is very

1 important and it is beneficial to the hard-of-hearing people,  
2 as well. There are a lot of those in number. The technology  
3 is changing, and I don't think we should just sit on the bench.  
4 I really feel that if the technology is advancing we should  
5 also advance. We should eliminate the things that are not  
6 working for us, and I think the technology is advancing.

7 What is your opinion, Chris?

8 There are some things that you don't need and we  
9 should eliminate them, you know. Some new things we should  
10 move on and advance to those new things.

11 MR. WAGNER: I want to make a comment that I think it  
12 is really important for us to remember that there are some deaf  
13 and hard-of-hearing people that are just starting to get use to  
14 the current equipment, the current service, and we are going to  
15 throw in a whole lot of new stuff you are going to get them off  
16 the wall. And I know because (inaudible) and the technology is  
17 there and it is appropriate at the time that we ought to think  
18 about the public that we are serving right now. We have people  
19 who are still learning how to use the new TTYs that are being  
20 provided by FTRI and the Ameriphone (phonetic), the transition  
21 from walking phone to Ameriphone we each everybody. Give it  
22 time, you know, with the new technology. And the contract with  
23 Sprint, I think we should continue.

24 MS. SALAK: Okay. Andrew, did you want to add  
25 something?

1           MR. BRENNEMAN: Okay. I do think with this product  
2 that we mentioned CAPTEL, and with the relay and with the VRS,  
3 it will make your lives a lot easier and the steps involved  
4 will be much less. This product is much easier to use, and I  
5 think it is more beneficial.

6           MR. HARDY: And plus you have nine months of a free  
7 trial. You can experiment with it. If it does not work out,  
8 then, that would be the biggest advantage. And if it works,  
9 that is fine. If it doesn't, drop it.

10          MS. BROWN: Let me ask Andrew or Robert a question,  
11 just to confirm in my mind. The offer to conduct the pilot for  
12 the CAPTEL phone in Florida is conditioned upon the Commission  
13 approving two additional years for your contract at one time;  
14 is that correct?

15          MR. GIUNTOLI: Right.

16          MS. BROWN: That is the issue for us.

17          And, Mr. Hardy, that is what we need to look at. We  
18 need to see whether that is beneficial for the consumers and  
19 for the State of Florida to change the contract to give Sprint  
20 the contract for two additional years. What that does then is  
21 preclude another provider from coming in and perhaps offering  
22 to provide service at a cheaper cost. That's what we need to  
23 look at, and that is what we need to go to the Commission for.  
24 And when we do, we can all assure you we will take your advice,  
25 which I think is go ahead with that so that you can try this

1 pilot.

2 MR. HARDY: Yes. Go ahead with the discussion. Go  
3 ahead and discuss with the groups of people to see exactly if  
4 it would work out. For example, you were talking about money.  
5 We don't have access to any of that information. We assume  
6 that you have that information. We do not have that  
7 information, and we cannot determine, if we see equipment,  
8 economy from that point of view. We can stand back and see the  
9 big picture, but right now we have no clue as to what the cost  
10 would be. Would it be like a one-cent increase? That would be  
11 cheap. If it's pretty extensive, we would back off of that.  
12 We really do not know, because we do not have any verification  
13 in front of us, so I really cannot answer.

14 MS. BROWN: Okay. Well, that is what we are going to  
15 be looking at when we take a recommendation to the Commission  
16 on whether to take Sprint up on its offer. And we will  
17 certainly tell the Commission your input into -- what you  
18 think, at least that it sounds like it might be worth trying.

19 MR. HARDY: Right. Try, but you have to think again  
20 that people would not be necessarily happy with an increase in  
21 cost, 8 cents, 12 cents, 15-cent surcharge increase. So I am  
22 concerned about a few people having concerns. We don't want  
23 such a fluctuation. We would like for the price to stay  
24 stable. How can we forecast the future as far as how we can  
25 help you? I see what we have in front of us, but how can we



1 make a better decision?

2 MS. BROWN: Your advice would be helpful on what you  
3 think the deaf community would like and how you think it would  
4 help them in communications. My understanding is that Sprint's  
5 offer doesn't involve an increase in price for the CAPTEL  
6 phone.

7 MR. BRENNEMAN: No charge to get more of the same  
8 product. The charge would be the same. It would be a  
9 substitution. You have a two-year extension that would be in  
10 place.

11 MS. SALAK: Now, there is no charge for the trial,  
12 but after the nine months the service would disappear. And if  
13 we wanted it then we would be paying for it?

14 MR. BRENNEMAN: No.

15 MS. SALAK: No?

16 MR. BRENNEMAN: It is a trial that is in place for  
17 nine months. And when you have made your decision, you can  
18 either take it off or not. You can continue with the service  
19 on a long-term basis until the product is final. When it is  
20 available in the market -- it is not available in the  
21 marketplace yet.

22 MR. GIUNTOLI: The video relay would be there.

23 MS. SALAK: I'm sorry. Let me ask again.

24 MR. HARDY: Nine months, that's all.

25 MS. SALAK: It is for nine months, and then after the

1 nine-month period is over, then if we wanted to keep CAPTEL, I  
2 mean, these 200 customers love it, think it is the greatest  
3 thing ever. Then to get the service there would be a fee for  
4 it, I assume.

5 MR. BRENNEMAN: No. When the nine months are over --  
6 we are not sure that this product has been finalized yet. It  
7 is up to Ultratec to make it final. So this product is not  
8 available in the marketplace yet unless Ultratec says yes. And  
9 when the nine months are over we have to evaluate what they say  
10 at that point.

11 MR. HARDY: There is nothing to lose, but I don't  
12 know about the information regarding the two years. That is  
13 your perspective. But as far as the trial period, that would  
14 not hurt. I don't know regarding the two years. I don't have  
15 access to that information.

16 MR. FORSTALL: The only concern I would have with the  
17 trial time is that once -- you are exposing people to a product  
18 that might not be available. They don't know for sure. And  
19 then the people if they like it, which I'm sure they will, will  
20 start asking for that equipment, and it might not be available  
21 in Florida. And it kind of puts us in an awkward position to  
22 have to respond to people who at one time had access to that  
23 and now we have to tell them no. It is something you might  
24 want to think about.

25 MR. HARDY: But they want numbers, they want

1 statistics, and we don't know that for now. Oh, they can see  
2 you. I was talking to James, but we need to know how many  
3 people would use the service, and we would need to know the  
4 rate of statistics, and we don't have that right now. Maybe a  
5 contract that we would have to give back to them, and we  
6 couldn't expect to have it on an ongoing basis. Maybe some  
7 information could be sent up to the state to be analyzed,  
8 recommended to the state to be analyzed and studied and see  
9 whether we want to do it or not. And I expect in the nine  
10 months, you know, we would have to go back and say, oh, James,  
11 buy me one. You know, I understand that in nine months I would  
12 have to give the product back.

13 MS. SALAK: Did you want to make additional comments?

14 MR. LANGE: I understand totally where FTRI is coming  
15 from, and be assured that the 200 people who participate in the  
16 CAPTEL program will know that it is a trial, and it may end at  
17 the end of nine months. And then Ultratec will have to decide  
18 whether or not this is something they want to market on a full  
19 scale, but everyone will know it is a trial and it will end in  
20 nine months. Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. SALAK: I just wanted to ask, one of the  
22 questions that you raised, Chris, was the dichotomy between the  
23 people who are grassroots and those that are high-tech. And  
24 I'm wondering -- from your comments, I understood you to say  
25 that the grassroots community is much larger than the high tech

1 community. Is that true or is that just an impression I got?

2 MR. WAGNER: Yes, that is true.

3 MS. SALAK: I was just wondering because I was  
4 worried about Turbo Code taking off. I see how naive I can be,  
5 and I see that those percentages are high. I guess I always  
6 equated Turbo Code with high-tech. I guess that is not true.  
7 No, not true. Okay.

8 MR. GIUNTOLI: High-tech and user friendly, you know,  
9 comparable.

10 MS. JONES: Is this also what you were thinking  
11 because of the age of the people who are hearing impaired, it  
12 influences whether they are high-tech or grassroots?

13 MS. SALAK: So the older --

14 MS. JONES: I have another one.

15 MS. SALAK: Pardon me?

16 MS. JONES: Not on this subject, but a feedback,  
17 okay?

18 MS. SALAK: I want to sneeze, I'm sorry.

19 MS. JONES: Now, we are talking about utopia, but I  
20 had put at the table the comments from different FLASH members,  
21 and throughout there seems to be one single problem and that is  
22 operators. And I am wondering who or how this problem is being  
23 addressed.

24 MS. SALAK: Andrew or Robert, would you like to  
25 address that issue about operators?

1 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. You are talking about this paper  
2 here? Okay. On the first one -- you're talking about the  
3 first one?

4 MS. JONES: I just felt that all of them are -- it  
5 boils down to one subject, operators. So however you want to  
6 handle it, I don't care.

7 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. This is all valid feedback, and  
8 we do really feel that your feedback is extremely important.  
9 In the last meeting, now, I don't know if you were here, but we  
10 did not get enough feedback from customers. We need to see  
11 more of those so that we can explain to them. For example, the  
12 accent, we need operators to be able to speak two languages in  
13 Florida, Spanish and English. That is part of the contract  
14 requirement.

15 We provide Spanish and English relay. So we have  
16 hired operators that have passed the English proficiency, and  
17 we can understand them clearly, but they have a little bit of  
18 an accent, but they are still qualified. We can't discriminate  
19 against people just because they have an accent. That is not  
20 just all of the qualification, you don't have to have an  
21 accent. We need to educate our consumers. Does that make it  
22 clear?

23 MS. JONES: But I understand that a user can request  
24 a Spanish or English operator; is that true?

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. We have a separate number, but

1 it all goes to the same agent, the same operator, and they  
2 handle both English and Spanish.

3 MR. HARDY: What do you mean? If you don't like that  
4 particular operator, can you transfer to another one?

5 MR. GIUNTOLI: You're asking -- if you mean that if  
6 you are not happy with that particular agent, you could ask for  
7 another one?

8 MS. JONES: Yes.

9 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes, you can. The relay callers, you  
10 are in control of the relay call, and you can do anything you  
11 want. You can change to another agent. That is part of  
12 outreach. Once again, we want to know about this, and we need  
13 to know about this.

14 MR. FORSTALL: Robert, I received a relay call last  
15 week from a TTY user, and I had an operator with a strong  
16 Spanish accent. Can I ask for an English one even though I am  
17 the receiver of the relay call? I am the receiver, can I ask  
18 for an English accent, or does the other person have to ask for  
19 that?

20 MR. GIUNTOLI: I don't understand what you are  
21 saying.

22 MR. FORSTALL: I received a relay call from a TTY  
23 user. Can I ask for a switch to a different operator because I  
24 could not understand her?

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes.

1 MR. FORSTALL: I can?

2 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. Both parties are in control, or  
3 at least you can tell the other person I don't understand your  
4 operator, and that person can ask for a substitution or a  
5 switch, either one, you or them.

6 MR. HARDY: That's great.

7 MR. GIUNTOLI: Do you want me to go through all of  
8 the list or just one question -- question-by-question?

9 MS. JONES: As far as requesting a different  
10 operator, is there any tally kept on individual operators being  
11 requested to change, you know?

12 MR. GIUNTOLI: No. We do not have that now, no. But  
13 that is not part of our current contract.

14 MS. SALAK: Robert, can you tell us all how you do  
15 monitor your operators and how you -- what you do? Do you ever  
16 listen in on a call and monitor them and see what is going on?

17 MR. GIUNTOLI: We do pull out operators from their  
18 work station and give them a test on a regular basis. We have  
19 to maintain quality control. We pull them out of their  
20 particular work station and give them a test and put them back  
21 in the field to work. And we do that about two times every  
22 month to every agent, we give them a test.

23 MS. SALAK: Do you ever listen in on a call when you  
24 know that -- when they may not be expecting you to be on the  
25 call? You know how you get a message whenever you dial-up, and

1 it says this call may be monitored for quality assurance, do  
2 you ever do that?

3 MR. GIUNTOLI: It depends on the contract. Some  
4 states allow that and some states do not, it just depends.

5 MS. SALAK: So we didn't include that in our  
6 contract, so you don't do it?

7 MR. GIUNTOLI: I need to check. I do not have it in  
8 my head here. Do you happen to know? I do not remember it. I  
9 will have to check on that. I don't remember.

10 MS. SALAK: The new guy on the block knows.

11 MR. LANGE: I used to work in operations with Sprint  
12 and -- AT&T back then, and Sprint, they require four  
13 observations a month. And it's a mixture of side-by-side,  
14 meaning the manager will plug in and observe the call in  
15 progress. And then there's the other one where they are pulled  
16 off line and are given a test. So it is a mixture of either  
17 side-by-side observation or testing off line. So they are very  
18 heavily monitored, yes. Thank you.

19 MS. JONES: And these people, as I say, have voiced  
20 these problems, and is there any advice that you can give us to  
21 tell people what to do when they have a problem with an  
22 operator?

23 MR. GIUNTOLI: Sprint would like to encourage people  
24 to contact customer services or call a supervisor. While you  
25 are on the relay call, ask for a supervisor. We need to hear



1 feedback from our customers. And we send out monthly customer  
2 service reports to Beth every month. You can see that is very  
3 small regarding the feedback, maybe 5 to 20 complaints a month  
4 out of 200,000 calls. It is a very small percentage. We need  
5 more feedback.

6 MR. HARDY: I'm curious. You said quality assurance  
7 or quality observation? He is saying a PRC, do they stand over  
8 you? Does Sprint -- does the Public Service Commission -- PRC  
9 is the name of the relay operator contract that provides the  
10 service. Do you monitor them, or does PRC monitor them?

11 MR. GIUNTOLI: We have subcontractors that do follow  
12 them and do have quality measurements and observations based on  
13 specific measurements.

14 MR. WAGNER: Let me comment about Robert's comment  
15 about encouraging people to contact customer service and/or  
16 call the supervisor. What the deaf service center does, we  
17 met, we talk about developing some type of flyer or piece of  
18 paper that will explain how to call customer service,  
19 especially for the grassroots people. We were trying to find a  
20 simple way for us to share that information with the grassroots  
21 people where they could contact Sprint and express their  
22 concerns about the operator. That is what we are doing right  
23 now.

24 MS. KING: Robert, when I'm using the relay, at the  
25 conclusion of my call, could I ask that CA to go ahead and just

1 transfer me to customer service at the conclusion of my call or  
2 would I have to make a separate call?

3 MR. GIUNTOLI: You can be transferred, yes. We  
4 encourage customers to give feedback to the supervisors, so the  
5 supervisor can see the mistakes on the screen, and they can  
6 correct the problem right there while it is fresh. Instead of  
7 waiting one or two days, and then the complaint comes in and  
8 some of that information is missing from the complaint.

9 MR. HARDY: I have a question. You said information  
10 is missing, how do you know? If the call is confidential you  
11 don't keep records, right?

12 MR. GIUNTOLI: Well, sometimes the operator doesn't  
13 necessarily remember, and they will say, well, I got a  
14 complaint from that customer. Well, I don't know. I process  
15 hundreds of calls a day. I don't remember. If we can catch it  
16 on the spot right there that would make a difference.

17 MS. SALAK: Would you like to go through your list  
18 one-by-one, or did you --

19 MS. JONES: No.

20 MS. SALAK: No? I did want to ask about one. There  
21 is a comment on here from Lynn Russo (phonetic). And she  
22 suggested that the introduction at the beginning is a little  
23 different where it says this is Lynn Russo, and you actually  
24 say the person's name up front, and then I am calling for  
25 information on, or I want to place an order, or whatever it is

1 that it is. And then you go on to explain that you are using  
2 relay. It seemed like that was a simple good idea. That  
3 instead of saying this is a relay call up front, you say this  
4 is a person's name and that way it personalizes the call. It  
5 makes the company or whomever understand that this is a  
6 customer, friend, or whomever you want to talk to. It seems  
7 like a simple good idea to me. I don't know. What do you  
8 think?

9 MR. GIUNTOLI: Yes. We have a contract that states  
10 how we must rate every call until the customer gives us  
11 instructions. So that is another outreach issue. We need to  
12 educate people. They can tell the operator they want to maybe  
13 firstly introduce themselves or give instructions to the agent.  
14 If they do not do that, we will always abide by what we  
15 require. That is already in the contract, because it is a  
16 script. It is scripted, and we have to follow that every day  
17 unless the customer requests otherwise.

18 MS. JONES: I understood from this person who made  
19 that recommendation that she had filled out a profile. So what  
20 questions are asked on that profile?

21 MR. GIUNTOLI: Many different questions. A lot of  
22 different things are on the profile. Maybe if you could tell  
23 her to call me, I would be happy to talk with her and try to  
24 find out a better solution. I am happy to talk with her.

25 MS. JONES: Okay. Thank you.

1 MS. SALAK: Ms. Jones, was there anything else on  
2 here you wanted to discuss for sure?

3 MS. JONES: Pardon?

4 MS. SALAK: Were there any of these items that you  
5 wanted to discuss?

6 MS. JONES: I don't think so.

7 MS. SALAK: All righty. Thank you.

8 Thank you, Robert.

9 Did anyone else have any feedback on the relay  
10 service today? No? Okay.

11 We wanted to -- as part of wanting to make these  
12 meetings more meaningful to you, do you have any suggested  
13 future topics today that you would like to see on the next  
14 meeting. Obviously, we will be following up to tell you what  
15 we recommended, because we will have to go to agenda within the  
16 next two months. What we recommended about the membership and  
17 about the FTRI budget and about the Sprint contract, those will  
18 all be our near-term issues, and we will follow up with that.

19 Besides that, is there something in particular you  
20 would like on the next agenda? No?

21 We looked up the law on how many times we have to  
22 meet a year, and there is no set amount of number of times that  
23 we have to meet. Since I have been doing this, we have been  
24 doing it about twice a year. I don't know how you feel about  
25 that. But, how do you feel about that? I like it when -- in

1 particular to meet when we have some issues that we know we are  
2 going to be going to agenda with. Do you feel like you are not  
3 here enough, or what would you -- or do you think this is just  
4 right, or what?

5 MR. HARDY: It varies. We can't predict the future,  
6 we just don't know. If it is an important issue that pops up,  
7 then we have to meet more often. If it is a quiet period, we  
8 don't need to meet as often.

9 MR. WAGNER: If there is a meeting at least twice a  
10 year and I like to come back and see what kind of impact we  
11 received from the website and ask if there are changes then how  
12 the deaf and hard of hearing community responded to customer  
13 service because we want to get the flyer out, and maybe we can  
14 post it on the website and set up a (inaudible) for grassroots  
15 people to be able to answer or get the information.

16 MS. SALAK: Okay. That would be good. Any other  
17 suggestions for topics?

18 MR. HARDY: I'm curious, do we have any role in the  
19 RFP for FTRI? Like, for example, providing services to the  
20 state, who makes that decision?

21 MS. SALAK: FTRI.

22 MR. HARDY: So we have no role in that.

23 MS. SALAK: No, not that I am aware of.

24 MR. HARDY: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that. I  
25 wanted to be able to put that down.

1 MS. SALAK: I wanted to propose a couple of --

2 MR. HARDY: Some people assume that we review the  
3 FTRI RFP. We don't review FTRI's RFP, correct? We need to be  
4 clear. We need to put that down.

5 MS. SALAK: The organization was established by the  
6 Legislature and the Commission is their oversight. But the  
7 advisory committee is to advise the Commission on really  
8 hearing customer comments and what is happening and advising us  
9 on what we should be recommending.

10 MR. HARDY: And, anything? Just the one thing? Is  
11 that the only thing we are responsible to, is to advise you as  
12 to what the customers want? Is that all?

13 MS. SALAK: No, no. She has the statute.

14 MS. BROWN: It appears that you have an advisory role  
15 for the Commission and the administrator, FTRI. It says the  
16 advisory committee shall provide the expertise, experience, and  
17 perspective of persons who are hearing-impaired or  
18 speech-impaired to the Commission and to the administrator  
19 during all phases of the development and operation of the  
20 telecommunication access system.

21 The advisory committee shall advise the Commission  
22 and the administrator on any matter relating to the quality and  
23 cost-effectiveness of the telecommunications relay service and  
24 the specialized telecommunications devices distribution system.

25 The advisory committee may submit material for

1 inclusion in the annual report to the President of the Senate  
2 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. All right.

3 That's it, Section 427.706(2), Florida Statutes,  
4 which we will put on our website. I think they are already on  
5 there, right, Susan?

6 MR. HARDY: Good. That is important information. So  
7 I understand what my role is. Good. Thank you.

8 MS. SALAK: We had a suggestion during the break that  
9 when we start doing the agenda for the next meeting is that we  
10 keep it on the website and that we keep updating it. As we get  
11 more information of things we want to talk about so we can --  
12 maybe right now we would put reaction to website and response  
13 to customer service form. So we can put those down. We can  
14 put update on Sprint contract or whatever else we have. But we  
15 can have it out there on the website, and you all can check it  
16 and see what we will be discussing. And so it will be a work  
17 in progress, but at least it is better than you not knowing  
18 until the bitter end what we are going to discuss.

19 MR. HARDY: What about a copy of the transcripts?  
20 Are they available? How can we request -- if people want to  
21 ask how to get copies of the transcripts, what is the process?  
22 What is the procedure for getting those copies?

23 MS. SALAK: Actually, I think that you can -- if you  
24 go to our web page and you link into our dockets, there is a  
25 specific docket associated with this, 991222-TP. And if you

1 there and get into the -- it will tell you what documents have  
2 been filed, and you can click on it and the transcript will  
3 come up and you can print it.

4 MR. HARDY: That is amazing.

5 MS. SALAK: Thank you.

6 MR. HARDY: So we need to put that down, Chris, so  
7 that we can let FAD know.

8 MS. SALAK: When we have the new website up, we have  
9 a link directly to that docket included here. And then if you  
10 go to the documents, it will link you to this, and people can  
11 hear exactly what happened at the meeting.

12 MR. HARDY: That's great.

13 MS. SALAK: We have a couple of dates to throw out  
14 for the next meeting. I haven't passed this by everybody, but  
15 October 7th appears to be available and October 21st. So you  
16 can get back with me later or you can e-mail Susan or me and  
17 let me know. Or if you could tell us today, that would be  
18 great.

19 MR. HARDY: Okay.

20 MR. WAGNER: Either one of those dates would be fine  
21 with me.

22 MR. HARDY: Are they both Mondays? Yes.

23 MS. SALAK: We were discussing your suggestion again  
24 about traveling around the state, and we haven't taken much  
25 action on that because there have been limitations on travel



1 for state employees. So until we find out what our budget  
2 really looks like and what our travel restrictions may or may  
3 not be --

4 MR. WAGNER: (Inaudible.)

5 MS. SALAK: There we go. That would be a new twist  
6 on things. But, anyway, that is our plan. I need to remind  
7 you to get your travel expense forms over here and turn them  
8 into Susan, and she will get them processed as quickly as she  
9 can. And I think we have done all of our business for today.

10 Is there anything else we need to discuss?

11 Thank you all for coming. I do appreciate it.

12 MR. HARDY: Motion to adjourn.

13 MS. SALAK: I don't even need a second. We are  
14 all -- thank you.

15 (The meeting concluded at 4:27 p.m.)

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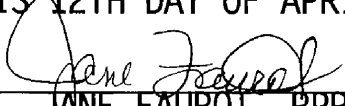
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I, JANE FAUROT, RPR, Chief, Office of Hearing Reporter Services, Division of Commission Clerk and Administrative Services, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard by the Staff of the Florida Public Service Commission at the time and place herein stated;

It is further certified that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript, consisting of 81 pages, constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

DATED THIS 12TH DAY OF APRIL, 2002.



\_\_\_\_\_  
 JANE FAUROT, RPR  
 Chief, Office of Hearing Reporter Services  
 FPSC Division of Commission Clerk and  
 Administrative Services  
 (850) 413-6732