BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 040763-TP

In the Matter of

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR RELAY SERVICE, BEGINNING IN JUNE 2005, FOR THE HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED, AND OTHER IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE FLORIDA TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS SYSTEM ACT OF 1991.
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PROCEEDINGS: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Friday, October 6, 2006

TIME: Commenced at 1:00 p.m.
Concluded at 3:22 p.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center
Room 148
4075 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, Florida

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

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IN ATTENDANCE:

JULIE CHURCH, Deaf Service Center Association of Florida.

CHRISTOPHER D. WAGNER, Florida Association of the Deaf, Inc.

TOM D'ANGELO, MAGGIE SCHOOLAR and NANCY SCHNITZER, Sprint.

KATHY BORZELL, Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People.

JIMMY L. PETERSON, Florida Association of the Deaf.

JAMES FORSTALL, FTRI.

BARBARA DREYFUS, Ultratec.

LORAINE OVERLAND and KEVIN COLWELL, CapTel.

FOR THE FPSC:

LEE ENG TAN, ESQUIRE, FPSC Division of Legal Services.

RICK MOSES, BETH SALAK and BOB CASEY, FPSC Division of Competitive Markets & Enforcement.

INTERPRETERS:

BETTY DEAN
STEVIE FENTON
DANA LACHTER
NANCY THOMAS

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MOSES: My name is Rick Moses, and to my left is Bob Casey and to my right is Lee Eng Tan. And last time I forgot to let her read the notice, so I promised I would let her read the notice today. So I will turn it over to her for the moment.

MS. TAN: Notice is hereby given that the Telecommunications Access System Act Advisory Committee to the Florida Public Service Commission will hold a committee meeting to which all parties and other interested persons are invited. The meeting will be held on October 6th, 2006, at the following time and location: 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Room 148, Betty Easley Conference Center, 4075 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Florida 32399. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss current relevant issues related to relay such as service quality, CapTel and other items.

MR. MOSES: Okay. And I'd also like to acknowledge Dana Lachter that's been given to us on loan from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for coming and helping with the interpreting services today. We were really struggling trying to come up with enough interpreters, and she was gracious enough to come help us and we certainly appreciate it. Thank you.

And with that, as you speak, if you would please acknowledge yourselves instead of going through introductions

all the way around the room. If you'd just -- the first time you speak just introduce yourselves to everyone. We'll know who you are, and I think that will be helpful. And everybody has got travel reimbursement forms. I don't think there's any other housekeeping that's got to be done up-front unless any of you can think of anything I've forgotten. Surely I've forgotten something.

Okay. With that, we will start out with James Forstall making his presentation on his outreach efforts. James.

MR. FORSTALL: Good afternoon. My name is James Forstall, and I'm the Executive Director of Florida Telecommunications Relay, Incorporated. And thank you, Mr. Moses, for allowing me to be here to make my presentation. And today I plan to provide you with an update on both the equipment distribution program as well as some outreach activities.

During fiscal year 2005 and 2006, FTRI provided over 52,876 client services throughout the state, which includes 50 percent of them being new, 34 percent being exchanges, 4.5 percent modified, 8.6 percent return and follow-up. The average monthly service for the year was 4,406. This includes all services provided from the FTRI office, as well as all the regional distribution centers throughout the state.

Last year FTRI served 26,566 new clients, and they

are broken down into four groups. We show deaf, 410; hard of hearing, 25,784; speech impaired, 257; and dual sensory impaired, 115.

The application for new clients was certified by the following categories, with Deaf Service Center directors being at the top with 13,252, followed by the audiologist, hearing aid specialist, licensed physician, state certified teacher, state agency, speech pathologist and federal agency.

And the age group breakdown is as follows. This year for the first time in the history of FTRI the 80 and 89 age bracket was the largest group to receive new equipment from FTRI. Prior to this -- prior to last year, the age group 70 to 79 has consistently been the top group.

Equipment distributed during fiscal year 2005 and 2006, we distributed over 56,000 pieces of equipment, which averages out to 4,697 different pieces of equipment a month. The highest volume was the volume control phone at 77.5 percent of all equipment distributed. The reason the equipment is higher than the number of new clients is because the majority of clients will get two pieces of equipment.

Outreach. During fiscal year 2005 and 2006, FTRI and the RDC together conducted over 2,084 outreach activities throughout the state. Also, together we signed up 1,839 different businesses as Relay Friendly partners. Additionally, information about Florida Relay and the FTRI program have been

made available to over 145,000 employees throughout the Business Partnership Program. And the reason we know this is because each business is required to fill out a card, a comment card that indicates that information. We do request how many employees they have.

Also, FTRI designed a new pull-up display for the Florida Relay service, we worked closely with Sprint in developing this, and we provided each of the RDCs a display for their own use. We also publish and mail the Florida Link, which is the FTRI newsletter, to over 323,000 clients and business partners as well.

FTRI continues to partner with several organizations or state agencies throughout the state. There's a list of them: The Florida Association for the Deaf, Florida Association for Late-Deafened Adults, FLASHHH, which is now Florida HLA (phonetic), AGBELL, Florida School for the Deaf-Blind, Sprint, Tallahassee Senior Center, Department of Education, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Health, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, et cetera.

We also purchased media time statewide for both the Florida Relay and the FTRI equipment program through public service announcements. We received an 18-to-1 ratio coverage throughout the whole state.

We also revised, printed and disseminated the FTRI Application and Referral Cards. We also disseminated a

quarterly E-Link newsletter to maintain contact with businesses who are Florida Relay partners. Also, we provided approximately 742 equipment distribution program and 352 outreach hours of training to the regional distribution centers during this fiscal year. And FTRI had a training conference that was held with 100 percent RDC participation.

Here's a copy of the Florida Link that was disseminated in the Spring of 2006, and as well as the CapTel newsletter. For the last two quarters FTRI has been working with Ultratec to provide a CapTel newsletter to the CapTel users throughout the state. We felt that this was a collaboration that would allow the CapTel users throughout the state to stay or keep current with the most recent information about CapTel.

Also, FTRI worked very closely with the Florida Department of Education to finalize the Florida Relay Educational Kit that is currently being tested among 40 schools throughout the state. Once we obtain feedback from the schools, we will be able to modify the curriculum and prepare for dissemination in August of 2007. I have with me a copy of the kit that I'd like to pass along for everyone to get a look at, and I also have a video that I would like to show.

This video is going to be included in each kit. It's our hope that we'll be able to disseminate these kits to all the schools throughout the state, and it's specifically geared

toward the third and fourth and fifth graders.

(Video played.)

MR. FORSTALL: Now prior to doing this video, FTRI had conducted a survey with some elementary schools in the city, of Leon County, Tallahassee. We had one from the third, fourth and fifth grades, and all three of them rated very highly with the video because we had -- the State of Maryland had produced this video a few years back and we decided to just kind of piggyback along with what they did instead of reinventing the wheel. So we were able to modify it for the State of Florida. But during the survey we found out that the kids really responded well to that video.

MR. MOSES: James, before you go any further, could I ask you a question about your CapTel newsletter?

MR. FORSTALL: Sure.

MR. MOSES: Does that go out to every CapTel user?

MR. FORSTALL: Correct.

MR. MOSES: Would it be possible in that newsletter to put a notice in there that if they're not using the phone or they're dissatisfied with it, that they could send it back to you?

MR. FORSTALL: The newsletter is produced by CapTel, Ultratec. Whatever they usually put in the newsletter is what we send out. I'm sure that it --

MR. MOSES: Barbara, is that something that could be

done?

MS. DREYFUS: We could probably attach something to the newsletter and send it out because it's designed for all users throughout the U.S. But we could do a cover letter or a postcard or something and -- (inaudible).

MR. MOSES: Anybody that speaks needs to come up to a microphone so the court reporters can hear you.

Would you mind repeating that so they can catch it, please.

MS. DREYFUS: This is Barbara Dreyfus. I said that we could put some kind of an insert into the CapTel newsletter mailing that we do for Florida so that we can request if people are not using their phones, they send them back to FTRI, if they wanted to design something for us to include.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Thank you.

MR. FORSTALL: This is James. If I might add, Tom and I are working closely trying to set up a regional planning for CapTel users throughout the state, and we're planning, we're planning to send a special invitation to the CapTel users with a notification on that invitation that if they're not currently using the CapTel, to please contact FTRI or come to that training session to learn more about how to use a phone or exchange it for another phone that works for them. And we're still working on coordinating that first regional training which we hope to be in Tampa.

MR. MOSES: Could you let us know when you get that done and also when that newsletter has the attachment done? We'd be interested in knowing what the results are on getting the phones back that are not being used.

MR. FORSTALL: I sure will.

MR. MOSES: Thank you.

Chris.

MR. WAGNER: So could you tell me why you're suggesting that we add that to the newsletter? Do you see that the numbers of CapTel are different from the numbers being used? I'm wondering why you're raising that issue.

MR. MOSES: We're looking at quite a bit of an investment in CapTel phones that have been distributed. And according to the reports, there's less than 50 percent or right at 50 percent of them are being used just one time a month. In other words, some of them are sitting out there not being used at all. And if they're not going to be used, we'd like to get them back and get them into the hands of people that will use them.

MR. WAGNER: Could it be maybe that people need more training? I know that CapTel can be complicated.

MR. MOSES: It's possible. But if they're not inquiring about the training, how do you know they're going to need it? And I think a lot of them, there's probably been a death in the family that the phone is sitting in a closet

somewhere. There's quite a few different reasons that the phone may not be being used. But if it's not being used at all during the month, something is wrong, so we need to address it in some manner. But if there's a notice in there, at least maybe then they'll maybe get some help, if they need help with it.

Yes.

MS. BORZELL: I think more CapTels would be used if the quality of captioning was better. I mean, that's the bottom line. That's what the problem is. The sound quality of the CapTel is very good, but -- excellent actually. But the captioning leaves a lot to be desired. I don't see much change myself. And I'm not getting that -- I'm receiving reports from other people that way.

So I think as we talk about returning unused phones, we really need to focus on why they're being -- they're not being used. And I think deaths in families and things like that, those are a minimum of phones not used. We really need to speak to the quality of CapTel's captioning.

MR. MOSES: And we're going to speak on that topic a little bit later in the agenda. Thank you.

Go ahead, James. I'm sorry for the interruption.

MR. FORSTALL: Okay. Just to add to the CapTel training issue, FTRI does provide training to all the regional distribution centers throughout the state. We provided several

one-on-one training. We've even had trainers from Ultratec to come and conduct that training for our trainers in the field. And it is the RDC's responsibility to educate the consumers that should they need additional training, they're more than welcome to receive it. So it is available for them.

Okay. The next area that I would like to draw your attention to is the FTRI website. We've made some changes over the last few months, and we feel that this new look gives it a little cleaner look, plus allows people to navigate the website easier. And a couple of the things were put on the front page, the home page that we feel like it's beneficial to anyone that visits our website. And if you look right here, upcoming events, these, all these events that are listed are the events that both FTRI and the RDCs conduct throughout the state. And the reason you'll see October 3rd up here is because we decided to leave a couple of days on there just so in the event a client or someone did go to the event and they couldn't remember what it was, if they wanted to go back to review it, they had that ability to do it. These are all the different outreach activities right here. If you look over here, it says, "Outreach." That's an outreach presentation that's being made. And right here, phone distribution is where clients or consumers or anyone for that matter can go to that particular site to pick up a phone or learn more about the phone.

And if you click on -- for example, I've got the TASA

meeting in Tallahassee. If somebody were to click on it, find out more, they can get the details of the time and also the location of where the meeting is in the event they want to know where, how to get to the meeting. So each event has this information available for them.

And we, we encourage the RDCs or we require the RDCs to complete all the outreach activities as well as the distribution. When they do complete the form, they come to the FTRI office to review it and approve it before we make it available on the site. But we have all these activities. And there's quite a bit of outreach that goes on throughout the state. I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

Also, if a person wants to know where they can go to obtain equipment, they can click on this site and get the different sites, locations throughout the state, and it also does provide them with a map of where the, of where the place is. And this is also -- they have a website. They can click on the website and find out more about the center, the RDCs that work with us to provide the service.

And also there's quite a bit of information about the relay service, information about the account manager, different types of relay calls that are available and frequently asked questions about the relay service. We also provide information, links to different organizations. We also moved our Business Partnership Program to a webbase, which allows any

businesses that are interested in signing up as a partner, they may do so by clicking on here, which will take them to an application page. And once they complete that page, FTRI or the system will automatically send them an email which will give them the password to go into the system to download all the information about business partnerships such as the video, how to make a relay call, all the printed material that we do have available. And should anybody want to search the site for how to locate a business partner in the area, depending on the topics, you've got Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Bradenton -- these are a list of them. And about us, we have about FTRI and, of course, the Public Service Commission, we have the Telecommunications Access Systems Act available, demographic information about the client. It needs to be updated for last year, but this is what it looks like. And, of course, we have our public service announcements on here.

We also have CapTel. So if a person wanted to know more about CapTel, they can go directly to the CapTel website, and we also have our newsletter made available. And, of course, the phones, the different types of equipment. And should they want to download an application, they may do that as well. However, we do not accept applications electronically because they still need to be certified by a TASA-approved certifier.

And this is the password-protected site where any of

our contractors, the RDCs can go in and get the information. What we have right here is an RDC resource page. Any time we have an important announcement about any part of the program, this is a place where we can post it. So any time an RDC goes in to search the AIMS program to find out about the client, this is what, this is the first page they will see. And they can use the AIMS program to look up a client to see if they're already in the system to prevent duplication.

This is the Business Partnership Program area. We ask businesses to fill out a survey once it's, you know, gotten the information. We request that they fill out a survey. And all the information about the program is listed here as well. And we just -- this is about a couple of months in the system and we have not really promoted it as well. We already have a few businesses that signed up. So we're pleased about that. And also on online ordering system whereby an RDC's material for their center, application, any type of form, they're able to go to this particular site and order it directly from the vendor. And once we approve it, it'll be shipped out.

Okay. And should anybody have any questions, I'll be glad to -- that concludes my presentation, and I'll be glad to answer any questions anybody might have.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Thank you, James.

MR. FORSTALL: Thank you.

MR. MOSES: It looks like you've done a lot of work

on your website.

Yes. We have a question over here.

MS. CHURCH: Hi. Julie Church. I just wanted to know -- you gave us statistics for this year or for '05/'06. How do those statistics compare to the prior year?

MR. FORSTALL: The number of new clients over prior year has decreased. And a couple of reasons that could be for that is last year we took a concentrated effort and recruited new businesses to be, recruited it to be part of the business program. But we did see a decrease over last year.

MR. MOSES: Thank you.

(Recess taken.)

MR. MOSES: All right. We're back and running, I believe. Does anyone else have any questions for James?

Okay. Next up is Chris Wagner. And if you'll give us --

MR. WAGNER: Sure. Thank you. Remember, I think it was not necessarily the last meeting, but the meeting before I was talking about the possibility of some changes with the TASA legislation? So I did do some researching and found out that there is a need for some changes with the current statutes.

Firstly, the current statute has some language in there that needs to be changed. It's like not politically correct words. They say "hearing impairment, hearing impairment." We don't use that word anymore.

I would like to talk a little bit about what we would like. The Florida Association for the Deaf is planning to set up a legislative agenda this upcoming session. And I'm working with a lobbyist and several other organizations, we are working together to promote some bills with this upcoming session, which will also, will be included with TASA as well. It will include some language changes, minor changes, and also I want to add two things in the statute. One is the surcharge on wireless, wireless carriers. And the reason why I would like to see that is I have noticed that the law was written back in 1991, and we didn't have cell phones back then, we had pagers. So more people are using wireless than landlines. And I have noticed that many hearing people use wireless when they want to make their calls and they're not paying for it. There's a cost for relay users to use wireless. And, also, deaf people do use pagers to make relay calls, to make relay calls. And I feel like it's time for us to change and challenge some of these issues with the Legislature and make some amendment in the laws.

And also I would like to make an amendment in reference to the equipment distribution program. If it's possible for FTRI to add cell phones for hard-of-hearing people and pagers, to distribute pagers for the deaf, and for the speech impaired also, they can use pagers. And we would like to see those two areas -- we do not want to change the current

language but add two things into the current statutes.

One of the benefits is, of course, we could have more individualized choice as hard-of-hearing people and speech-impaired people.

And also it's an opportunity to develop a collaboration with the emergency management teams, Department of Transportation. We can both correspond with information and become more involved in emergency preparation for the State of Florida. I do feel that that is one way that we can have the collaboration in ensuring that the information is distributed appropriately to the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired.

I do have -- I have talked with several people and with our lobbyists as well, and they foresee that there is going to be some opposition with this, especially from the wireless carriers.

The wireless carriers do not really want to be involved or have any type of surcharge. But, again, I do feel that it is their responsibility to take this upon themselves to give us the ability to do this because wireless carriers are also involved in relay themselves.

I think it's a good time now, and I'm glad that Bob Casey is aware of this, that with the video relay service and the Internet relay service, the FCC has decided that this is going to happen in the near future, and it could impact us. And the wireless surcharge would help us prepare for that. It

is coming up. It is definite.

The other challenge is with the equipment itself, how will we start adding this as the -- in the equipment distribution program? Who would be responsible to distribute that? What if the pager or cell phone breaks down? Those are many items that we need to discuss. And I know when we push for the legislative changes and with TASA and the PSC, we need to be prepared to promote these changes and give time to have these changes occur.

The other issue I have is if you look in the statute, 427.706, Advisory Committee, I mean, we're not in compliance. We have several groups that have never even been here since I've been involved, which has been several years. I haven't seen these groups represented. It's time for us to look at this and make some changes in this section also. For example, the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities -- what? Oh.

MR. MOSES: Just slow down just a little bit, Chris, if you would.

MS. DEAN: Yes, I'm okay.

MR. WAGNER: The interpreter is fine, so.

MR. MOSES: That's not the one I'm worried about.

MR. WAGNER: Oh, okay. Okay. Talking about the Center for Advocacy for Persons with Disability -- Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities. Maybe if they're not going to represent or send a representative, we could choose

another group to represent them. And also the, the Florida League of Seniors and Self-Help for Hard of Hearing, their official name is the Hearing Loss Association of America. And the Coalition for Persons with Dual Sensory Disabilities, I've never even heard of that group. So I think it's time for us to make some amendments. I think it's a good year to do that. And I would like to add wireless with those amendments in this section.

Lastly, 427.708, as I reviewed it, I was wondering who's responsible for enforcing that part. This is important. It says it requires a county sheriff to have a TTY, it's required that the fire stations have a TTY. All of this says it's mandatory. And that hospitals must have this. Who is enforcing that? It's a good question. As I was reviewing it, is it the Public Service Commission's responsibility or FTRI's responsibility? I would like to make sure that that does get done.

Really it was not my intention to give a presentation, but I wanted to point out some issues and give you advanced notice that our organization will be meeting with legislatures and have several possible sponsors that we will be working with to draft the bills and the amendments for these sections.

I know that we have talked about you as staff people cannot necessarily take a position on this, but I'm serious

that with my involvement as the vice president of the National Association for the Deaf, and the FCC is very active in the legislative statutes, I do feel that it's time ourselves to take action on this. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Chris.

Does anyone have any questions for Chris? We certainly appreciate your help trying to get the wireless surcharge, I can assure you of that.

Yes, Beth. Beth, you need to come up to a microphone.

MR. WAGNER: Hi, Beth.

MS. SALAK: Hi, Chris. I just had a question. You've decided to include wireless, and that is prevalent in today's society definitely. I'm curious, there are a lot of other technologies that are coming online, and have you considered those other technologies?

VoIP, a lot of our wireline companies are switching to VoIP, voice over the Internet protocol. Have you --

MR. WAGNER: Yes, we have looked into surcharges for the cable companies. One -- we can only handle one thing at a time. Still we're a little foggy when it comes to the cable companies. We feel that right now deaf and hard-of-hearing people are using wireless more than focusing on cable companies. And I think it's also right now, at this time it's more affordable. But, yes, there are more deaf and

hard-of-hearing people that are using video relay and Internet relay. But right now I see that more people are using wireless compared to the Internet. That's what I'm seeing at this time.

MS. SALAK: When you say cable, are you talking about telecommunications service offered by cable or are you talking about the traditional cable TV?

MR. WAGNER: I'm talking about -- you mean -- not telecommunications services offered by cable -- very few deaf and hard-of-hearing, my point, very few deaf and hard-of-hearing people are using VoIP right now, so I don't see the benefit from that at this time. There's a lot of complications when it comes to accessing the TTY. Because of the analog, converting it to digital, right now there's a lot of complicated issues when it comes to that. So we're not looking into that at this time.

MS. SALAK: Okay. So when you talk about the changes to the statute, are you just, for wireless are you just talking about inserting the word "wireless" where it talks about wireline? I mean, I was just wondering, have you crafted your changes to the statute yet?

MR. WAGNER: We're talking about wireless phones.

MS. SALAK: Right.

MR. WAGNER: So I would avoid talking about Internet right now at this point. But it is possible for us to use the surcharge from wireless telephones to help pay for VRS or

Internet relay if that comes up in the future. I'm not sure.

MS. SALAK: So have you crafted your language yet? Have you written the language?

MR. WAGNER: We have a lobbyist who is working with us on some of it. But really it's really simple, very basic change. When we say the standard charges -- let me find the word that they're using now.

MS. SALAK: Okay.

MR. WAGNER: It said, "standard line." And we want to add a new paragraph there that says, "In addition, charges for wireless." And that's all just a very simple addition.

MS. SALAK: Okay.

MR. WAGNER: I mean, I'm looking for feedback from you as well.

MS. SALAK: I agree with you that the organizations that are part of the advisory committee, that does need to be updated. I mean this personally, because we'll send letters to them and ask for people to come, and we either won't get them or we recognize that the agency or group may not exist any longer. So that has been troubling for us also historically.

MR. MOSES: Julie.

MR. WAGNER: Are you concerned about us adding wireless in the language, into the statute?

MS. SALAK: I believe that your lobbyists are correct that the wireless will put up a fight.

MR. WAGNER: Oh, yes, I agree.

MR. MOSES: Yes.

MS. CHURCH: I just want to get back a minute to what -- I believe your name is Beth; right?

MS. SALAK: Yes.

MS. CHURCH: What Beth said about the voice over IP. I think when you're talking about deaf and hard of hearing, deaf people are using more wireless. But I think there's a big population of seniors primarily that are going to start getting into the voice over IP because it's cheaper. And because -- even in the senior population computer use is on the rise and the cable companies are offering these packages where you can get your Internet, your cable and your phone for a very inexpensive -- or for a more inexpensive rate than having a traditional landline. So I do think it's going to be an issue for amplified phone and CapTel users in the future.

MR. CASEY: Chris, I would like to add just one thing. Could you please keep us informed as much as possible on that new legislation? We do have a legislative group here at the Commission. So if you would, just keep us informed along the way. Thank you.

MR. WAGNER: And I do have to tell you, I did speak with FTRI just to ensure that we're on the same, in the same ballpark when we approach this. I want to make sure that they're going to be ready for the changes.

At the same time, understand our organization, we are a non-for-profit organization. We don't have large budgets like other organizations when it comes to the lobbyists. We just spent $24,000 last year on a lobbyist for different issues. So we want to make sure that our money is invested in lobbyists that are issues that are worth it. We don't want to raise issues if PSC is going to be opposed to it or if FTRI is opposed to what we're doing. So that's why I did want to bring it up to you today to make sure that you understand what we're doing and why we're doing what we're doing, because we are a membership-based group and we're doing this to represent our membership. And we want to make sure that everyone involved understands why we're doing -- that it's for the benefit of all of us, not just the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Thank you, Chris.

Next up is Bob Casey on the review of the FCC orders.

MR. CASEY: I didn't want to review a bunch of orders. What I want to do today is concentrate on two things: Video relay service and IP relay. It's one of the major issues that's going to affect the Florida Relay Program. The FCC is going to have to determine whether these programs are interstate -- or should be reimbursed through interstate or intrastate funds.

Now previously in different orders the FCC has stated that the present arrangement is only temporary and that

eventually the states will have to absorb the interstate costs. This is from Order FCC 04-137. I have some hard copies here of these slides that I'll pass out because I don't want to read everything on there.

As you can see, it says, "The Commission explained that the special funding arrangement was temporary and intended to speed the development of VRS, and that the Commission would continue to assess the availability of this service and its technological development and determine at some point in the future when it can best be funded in the traditional manner," which is, of course, split between interstate and intrastate.

They also put in here, "As we recognized in the IP Relay Declaratory Ruling and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the present arrangement of compensating all IP Relay calls from the Interstate TRS Fund was intended to be an interim one."

Shifting the burden of intrastate VRS and IP Relay costs to the states is not a matter of if, but when. At a recent State Relay Administrator Conference last month, I spoke with Jay Keithley, who is a Deputy Bureau Chief for the FCC, and what he stated is it's not in the too distant future when it's going to happen.

What would the effect be on Florida's TRS program? First, I want to take a look at what's happening. I have a 12-month period here from July '05 to June '06. And what I did

was I graphed out TRS, CapTel, VRS and IP Relay showing the minutes. As you can see, the traditional TRS is going down. IP Relay is going up. CapTel is going up. Even -- and VRS, of course; that's the biggest one.

Here I wrote down the actual minutes of -- minutes by month for all four of them: TRS, CapTel, VRS and IP Relay. Now I got the VRS and IP Relay minutes from the NECA website. They've been keeping track since July '05, supposedly in preparation for the allocation between interstate and intrastate.

I give the average number of minutes down at the bottom and then the percentage change from July '05, the month of July '05 to the month of June '06. As you can see, TRS went down 26 percent, CapTel has been up 64 percent, VRS up 105 percent, IP Relay up 49 percent.

Now what cost burden would be shifted if Florida Relay has to assume the VRS and IP Relay? Fourteen to $16 million a year. And that's based on using average minutes from January 2006 through June 2006 and annualizing it, and using an 80 percent and 89 percent estimate of intrastate calls. And the reason I used 80 percent and 89, 80 percent is the normal allocation percentage. 89 percent is what the FCC used in the CapTel order to divide interstate, interstate and intrastate.

What effect would it have on the actual surcharge?

It may increase the surcharge 8 to 10 cents a month. Presently it's 15 cents.

Now potential problems. The added cost may require a change in the Florida Statute mandating a relay surcharge cap of 25 cents per access line.

Another problem is IP Relay fraud. I've been trying to get an estimate of how much fraud is actually out there. At the Relay Administrator Conference I heard everything from 5 to 8 percent, 10 percent, 20 percent and even 80 percent. So I went to our provider, Sprint, and said, "Could you please give us your best estimate?" And they believe it's somewhere between 5 and 8 percent. But even at 5 to 8 percent, that would be somewhere between $200,000 and $400,000 a year in fraud. And in a minute I'm going to ask Sprint if they would talk about the fraud and what they're doing about it. They agreed that they would speak on it.

Also the FCC has not resolved what they call the IP-Enabled Services docket, which has to determine whether IP services are information services or telecommunication services. And, of course, this would result in whether they are intrastate or interstate regulation.

So right now they have to determine whether VoIP is an information service or a telecommunications service. If it's an information service, it should be interstate. And, of course, VRS and IP Relay being on the Internet then should also

be interstate and should be reimbursed out of the interstate fund.

Mandating VRS and IP Relay as part of the TRS program may eliminate competition among the providers. Why? Because Florida Statutes require one provider of relay services. Right now there's many providers of VRS and IP Relay out there. If we follow the statute, we'd only have one.

If a decision is made to require states to assume intrastate VRS and IP Relay costs, time must be allowed for legislative changes to be made. They can't be done overnight. The Legislature needs some advanced notice.

Here's some comments that Sprint put in. They don't agree with us. Their comments to the FCC, "The Commission should make the provision of VRS and IP Relay mandatory and make the states responsible for compensating intrastate minutes, therefore also making the states responsible for ensuring compliance with the mandatory minimum standards." We believe it should continue to be reimbursed out of the interstate fund, not intrastate.

Now what is the Commission doing to prepare for the possible assumption of the costs? In the annual report to the Legislature, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, we made special notation that this may be in the works so they have some advance notice of what may be happening.

Also, when the FTRI budget came around June 1st, 2006, the Commission issued an order to maintain the 15-cent surcharge per month. FTRI recommended that we reduce it to 9 cents a month. We thought it would be better to keep it at 15 cents, provide a little cushion if this VRS and IP Relay comes about soon. Now if it doesn't, if they decide to keep it interstate, we can, of course, credit it back and reduce the surcharge.

Now the FCC has asked for comments by October 30th on VRS and IP Relay costs. This is what the Commission will be recommending. We've already been to our Internal Affairs and the Commission has approved these statements.

VRS and IP Relay should continue to be funded through the interstate TRS fund. If state funding of VRS and IP Relay is mandated, it should not occur until the FCC resolves the fraudulent use of IP Relay services.

The FCC must resolve the jurisdictional separation issues of the IP-Enabled Services docket, determining whether IP-enabled services are information services or telecommunication services.

If a decision is made to require states to assume intrastate VRS and IP Relay costs, the FCC must allow time for states to make legislative changes on TRS surcharges.

And, finally, mandating VRS and IP Relay as part of the TRS program may eliminate competition for these services in

Florida since, by statute, Florida can have only one relay service provider.

Anybody have any questions? Chris?

MR. WAGNER: So basically you're saying it is the possibility of the Florida surcharge rate to go up, which means our current statute -- this does not include -- so my question, Bob, is you're saying that we might increase it 8 to 10-cent surcharge if VRS and IP Relay are included, but that would not include a wireless surcharge. So maybe with a wireless surcharge it would help us keep that a little bit more stable because we would have more users.

MR. CASEY: That's correct. The cost would be spread over a bigger base.

Now I'd like to ask Sprint if they can make a few comments on what they're doing about IP Relay fraud. Maggie?

MS. SCHOOLAR: Hi, Bob, I'd love to.

One thing I wanted to clarify in your presentation, the 5 to 8 percent of fraud that Sprint is estimating, that's Sprint's estimate. And so we're only one relay provider, so we don't have any kind of statistics on what, you know, percentage of fraud the other providers are experiencing right now. I wanted to make that clarification.

And what we do right now, we do two things. One thing is we work to block Internet fraud from coming into our system. And what we specifically are trying to block are

international callers calling in to do credit card scams. So we have always experienced inappropriate use of relay through all of our products. We always have a percentage of calls that are not true relay calls where someone who is hard of hearing is calling someone who is hearing. But the fraud that is in question here and that is so severe are in these pools of international fraud people who they make calls with and try to scam people with credit cards.

So what we do is we have developed a very complex system of blocking and changing as they change their IP addresses. We review our records every night and we update our blocks. And so it is a very complicated process that we went through that took a significant amount of time, and that has eliminated the majority of this fraud problem that we had.

But there were still calls that would come in and there's still calls that come in before we can get them blocked. And so the second tier that we put in was from the agent perspective and from an operational perspective. And we have developed a set of criteria where when a call comes in and it hits a certain number of our criteria, we will inform the voice person that it's our -- that we suspect this is a fraudulent call and they have the -- they can hang up, if they want. And in that situation, most of the voice people will hang up at that point. Some of them choose to continue to do the call.

So with those two methods that we've put in place, first of all blocking all of the traffic that we can and updating and changing it as the scammers figure out how to get around our system, then when it does get into our system, our agents will actually identify what we consider, you know, that it's hit this criteria. And the agents love doing it, they love catching these calls because they hate processing fraudulent calls and having been a part of this at all. So we feel that these have been very effective tools in really minimizing the amount of inappropriate use we have. And we can see that with our call volumes as well. In the past they would spike when some sort of fraudulent system would be accessing our system and then the next month would drop when we blocked it, and, you know, our call volumes were all over the place. Now they're just very steady. And we do believe that we are processing currently legitimate calls on the Internet, but I can't speak for any of the other providers.

MR. MOSES: Any other questions? Yes, James.

MR. FORSTALL: This is James. I have a two-part question. Should the FCC mandate that VRS and IP become a part of the program and we have to change the law to allow for more than one relay provider, who would be responsible for doing that and what kind of flexibility would be made in the law to allow for more than one provider?

MR. MOSES: I would imagine -- that's a good

question. Beth, would we be doing initiation of legislation in that situation or -- I'm not sure how that works.

MS. SALAK: I know of no plans for us to initiate any legislation to change it from one provider to multiple providers. I'm not -- I'm not convinced that would be a good idea either because of all the complications there are with having multiple providers.

But with that said, no. I mean, currently we have no plans to do that. I mean, that was the point in our comments is that, you know, we're supposed to foster competition, the FCC is supposed to foster competition, and it just might be a policy that would actually put a crimp on it.

MR. MOSES: Chris, did you have a question?

MR. WAGNER: Yes, I did. I wanted to say that if we have to add VRS, then we're going to have to have options, we'll have to have options of providers. I know there are one provider, but there are many plans that have said there are no options. But many deaf people are spoiled by the options now. And really the FCC, it is their ruling that we must give everyone options. And I don't know if we plan to go back to that and --

MS. SALAK: Their ruling isn't --

MR. WAGNER: Right now the FCC -- currently they changed the rule last year and some VRS providers, they only had one provider for the equipment distribution, just one

provider for the VRS equipment distribution. So people spoke out, and the FCC did make a ruling last year, I think, in '05 saying that all VRS equipment, equipment must be open to all VRS providers. That means now that we have the video relay service or the video phone, and we can choose options of which relay provider that we want to use. And if we go, if we tell the state that, then possibly they're going to have to follow the FCC ruling.

MR. MOSES: It's going to be fun.

MR. CASEY: That's why it was under problems, potential problems.

(Laughter.)

MR. MOSES: Okay. Linda, do you need a break? Okay. Let's take a 15-minute break, and then we will reconvene at 2:20 or, excuse me, 2:25.

(Recess taken.)

MR. MOSES: Okay. If everybody would get seated, we'll get started again, please.

Next up we'll have Sprint give us an update on the CapTel service quality, and if you would, please, take it slow, Tom.

MR. D'ANGELO: Sure. I'll slow down for you, Rick. My name is Tom D'Angelo, and I am with Sprint, Florida Relay Account Manager, and I brought several of my Sprint team members here. I want to introduce them. First is Nancy

Thomas, our interpreter. Second is we have Loraine Overland. She is our Quality Assurance Manager based in the Jacksonville center. We also have Maggie Schoolar, who is our sales exec from Austin, Texas. And we have two more people that are here from CapTel. We have Barbara Dreyfus, flew in from California representing CapTel, and last, but not least, Kevin Colwell from Wisconsin.

Okay. So I have an agenda to go through, and then I will pass it on to Maggie and she'll say a few things, and then I'll get back to my PowerPoint. So, Maggie.

MS. SCHOOLAR: Good afternoon, everyone. Last time when I came to TASA I gave an overview on our CapTel performance testing process that at that time we had just, were just setting up, and we talked at length about CapTel. And I made a commitment that at the next TASA meeting we would provide the results to our testing process and explain to you how we've set it up, and bring CapTel here with us so that they can explain to you some of the things they've done and the initiatives that they've worked on, all to make sure that our CapTel performance is the best we can provide to the State of Florida. So that's exactly what we've done today. I'm excited about having this information to share with everyone.

We're also going to share with you a quality initiative for our TRS program that we have launched nationwide. Now we are not currently doing it in the State of

Florida because Florida -- our contract says specifically we cannot use the words "deaf and hard of hearing" in our announcements and explanations, and because of that we have had to leave Florida out of this program that we've designed.

Now we've rolled it nationwide. It's been in effect for a couple of months. It's had a very positive impact. And what we would like to do is share that with you and the specifics behind it and get your feedback on whether or not we should pursue and ask Florida to change that requirement in order to allow this to happen here or whether you would like to continue doing what you're doing. So that's all I've got today. So I'm going to hand it back over to Tom and Loraine.

MR. D'ANGELO: Thank you, Maggie. I'll go on with my PowerPoint. This is what Maggie was just sharing with you, what we're going to be discussing today.

The first is we're going to focus on enhancing our customer experience and we're going to explain how that works. And I have a DVD that I'm going to show you. But first I'm going to ask Loraine to share this with you, she's been very involved in this process, and the changes that we've noticed with our operators and our CAs. So, Loraine.

MS. OVERLAND: Hi. I'm really glad to be here. Sprint companywide actually implemented a Customer Experience Improvement Program. And Sprint TRS has kicked off the Customer Service Initiative in support of that Customer

Experience Improvement Program. And the Customer Service Initiative is just what it sounds like, and that is, you know, aimed at improving the customer's experience when they use the Sprint Relay Service.

One thing that we actually got from the -- I'm sorry. Business Development held some customer focus groups, and something that the customers shared with us is that they wanted a more friendly and warm interaction with the operators which they weren't currently getting because the operators were very concerned about staying within the operator mode. And in fearing, fearing of getting out of their transparency, they were coming across as robotic to the customers. So the customers asked, you know, can't we get your operators to be a little more warm and friendly, you know, when we're interacting with them? And so based on that customer feedback, we have begun training the agents and, you know, really pushing for the agents to know that it's okay to respond to customers when they have comments and questions for you when you're in the operator mode.

You know, just as if, you know, when you're the customer, you want people to talk to you in a warm, friendly manner, you know, remaining professional but be friendly about it. And that just reassured the agents that, oh, it is okay for me to say, "Well, good morning. This is Florida Relay Service. What number are you calling?" Whereas, before they

feared, you know, that that was breaking transparency. So that has been launched with this Customer Service Initiative. The operators are extremely happy to feel that they are able to be more friendly to the, to the customers.

Another thing is, as Maggie mentioned, launched nationwide was the ability for the operators to use the words "deaf and hard of hearing" in their announcement and their explanations. And we actually did a survey to kind of let us know, you know, does it really improve the customer experience if we change that? And based on our survey, when the agents were able to use the term "deaf or hard of hearing" in the announcement, it reduced the number of times that the agent had to actually provide the explanation from 26 percent of the time to 12 percent of the time. So in that it's really showing the customer an appreciation for their time and that we value their time and we don't need to make the introduction of the call any longer than it has to be. And we also found that it reduced the number of times that the hearing party disconnected the call either during the explanation or immediately following it from 10 percent of the time to 2 percent of the time. So we're connecting more calls or having to redial fewer times.

So as Maggie mentioned, you know, this has been changed all over the country, with the exception of Florida and California actually, and based on these changes we have had absolutely no customer complaints from the states where this

has been implemented. And so we would like to have this implemented in Florida as well because we view it as a positive change, and we don't expect any customer complaints based on our experience up to this point.

We are continuing to work on the Customer Service Initiative and identifying other improvements that would improve the customers' experience when they use the relay service. Just to give you an example of another item that we changed is when the operator dials out and reaches a recording, a business recording, the operator, instead of typing what can be an extremely lengthy recording, the operator types, you know, "Reached a recording. Would you like me to hold for a live person?" Or if there are options available on the recording, they'll type the recording through the options and then ask the customer, you know, "What option would you like me to select?" So, again, it's valuing that customer's time. And that has been a very positive change as well.

So that is the Customer Service Initiative. Do you have any questions about that before I move on?

MR. MOSES: Go ahead, Chris.

MR. WAGNER: I have two questions. I understand what you're saying. Florida doesn't permit in the contract us to use the words "deaf and hard of hearing." Are you talking about when the operator answers, "This is Florida Relay," that they're not allowed to say "deaf and hard of hearing"?

I understand originally way back the purpose was to respect the confidentiality of the caller. But, again, if you're saying that this is reducing -- that concerns are reduced and this reduces the complication, what are the chances that the TASA Advisory Board could advise the PSC to make that amendment in the contract?

MR. MOSES: That's what you're here for. You're the advisory board. I mean, if the deaf community believes it'll be a good change, and evidently across the country it's been a positive response to it, then all we have to do is a contract change to amend it to where they can vary from what the language is right now in the RFP. That's all that would have to be done.

MR. WAGNER: Okay. Then I make a motion as a member of the board for us to make that change. I feel that through their research and the quality assurance that we should consider making the change in -- what do you call it -- in the greeting in the language the agent can use, that they can add the words "deaf and hard of hearing" and the customer service as well.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Do the rest of you agree with that?

MS. CHURCH: I would second that.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Anyone opposed to it? Okay. Consider it done.

MR. D'ANGELO: So do y'all want to see a DVD? It basically explains the call process compared before and after this change.

MR. MOSES: Certainly.

(DVD played.)

MR. MOSES: You almost have to take a Dramamine to watch that thing.

(Laughter.)

One thing I need to remind you, too, though on this contract change, as you all know, it's not up to us. We can recommend to the Commission that they change it, but it's up to them to vote on it. But I really and truly don't see it being a problem.

Okay. Go ahead, Tom.

MR. D'ANGELO: Thank you. Next on the agenda that I have is relating to the CapTel testing program. So, Loraine, that's you again.

MS. OVERLAND: With the --

MR. MOSES: I'm sorry, Jim. Yes.

MR. PETERSON: I'm having a hard time seeing you. Can you stand up because we're not having interpreters -- when you're responding in sign, can you stand up so we can see what's going on?

MR. D'ANGELO: And next time on the agenda we'll discuss the CapTel program, and Loraine will be sharing with

you.

MS. OVERLAND: First, I'd like to say that we've heard your concerns regarding CapTel service quality. And based on those concerns, we began a test call program in January of this year. So currently we have eight months of performance testing completed. We do 100 test calls per month; 75 of those are in-state calls and 25 are interstate calls. We use a variety of scripts developed and changed on a regular basis, and the scripts are designed to mimic a natural conversation flow that would occur using the CapTel service.

During each test call what we evaluate is eight separate areas of the call. First we are evaluating accuracy, which is, of course, the accuracy of the captions, the average transcription rate, the number of clarification requests, which is how many times would the CapTel user need to clarify with the caller what was being conveyed. So although there may be, we'll say two accuracy errors, they may be errors that the CapTel user would immediately be able to identify what was meant to be conveyed in the conversation, so they would not be considered clarification requests. But only errors in which the CapTel user would not be able to identify what was, you know, what was meant by what was, I'm sorry, captioned, that would be considered a clarification request.

We tabulate the number of corrections that are made during the conversation, also the total number of errors. We

do not consider it a corrected error as -- in the total number of errors because it does have a correction for the, the CapTel user. We identify the initial delay, which is the time between when the caller begins speaking and the first word is captioned on the CapTel phone, as well as the final delay. So when was the last word spoken and the time that lapses before it's displayed on the CapTel phone? The average delay is the average of these two combined.

For September, again, we evaluated 100 calls in the month of September. The average accuracy was 98.16 percent; the transcription rate, 168 words per minute; had 105 clarification requests for all of the 100 calls; 255 corrections for all 100 calls; and 279 errors on all 100 calls. The average delay ranged from 3.8 to 5.1 seconds. We have -- for the delay there are four segments within the scripts, and so that's why there's a range between those four segments. It ranges from 3.8 to 5.1 seconds of delay times.

This next slide just shows from the time that we implemented the program back in January to the end of the month in September the average transcription rate and the total number of clarification requests.

What questions do you have about the testing program? Okay. Then I will turn it over to --

MR. MOSES: Go ahead.

MS. OVERLAND: -- Kevin -- oh, I'm sorry.

MS. BORZELL: I don't have any specific questions. I probably would challenge that 98 percent accuracy rate.

I have some feedback that I can provide now or we can wait until later. I don't know if it's appropriate for me to do this now. It's feedback from one of our members in Florida who uses CapTel regularly.

MR. MOSES: Certainly.

MS. BORZELL: Do you want that feedback now?

MR. MOSES: Certainly.

MS. BORZELL: Okay. This is a person who recently got a cochlear implant. And her comments are, "I use my CapTel all the time while I'm at home. Even though I hear so much better with my CI now, I still like to use the CapTel because the quality of the transmission is much better than my other landline phones or my cell phone. Regardless of that compliment, however, I still am disappointed with the error rate in the transcription from the operator. I watch what is being typed and can see the error rate is still high, and the number of times the CA types 'unclear' are many." And that's the feedback I've gotten from many people.

The second issue is a general question -- well, it's not a general question -- a specific question. It's not a comment but a question. "I also have a question about the CA operators. Are they bonded? Are there any security issues we should be concerned about? Often I will give people my credit

card information over a CapTel call and wonder if" -- and I should be speaking slower. I'm sorry. "Often I will give people my credit card information over a CapTel call and wonder if I should be concerned about the CA who could be writing these things down. Has this been discussed before?" I could not recall if it had been. I have always assumed that CapTel operators are bound by the same confidentiality as relay service operators, but I'd like to ask that question now. They are? Okay.

MR. COLWELL: Okay. First, I am Kevin Colwell, and I am a vice president -- oops. Start over. My name is Kevin Colwell. I'm a Vice President of Engineering for Ultratec, and we developed the technology that CapTel uses. And I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here and listen to your questions and concerns and hopefully address them.

On your immediate question about the bonded requirement for the CAs, indeed they are. They are required to sign, they are trained on the appropriate confidentiality issues, FCC requirements, and there are some organizations that have requirements beyond the FCC requirements, and all CAs must accept and sign responsibility statements for that as part of their training program.

I also wanted to take a minute today to talk about the program that we're working with Sprint on. Sprint developed this testing program. We value the independent

testing and input. Indeed, it's helped us find some things. So we think of that as a success.

We also value user input. It's the most important thing for us in terms of doing the best job we can to address the customer issues. So when you bring information specifically as you have about the client, that helps us as well.

Based on the feedback that we've had, we put together a program to address issues that consumers have brought to us about CapTel or the performance of CapTel. And we've done a number of things, but our focus, the most important one -- there's actually four things listed on here. I'm going to mention them by name, but I'm going to focus on one of them. We're working -- we have completed a process of improving the audio calibration and level and quality for the CAs that they use. We've developed more sophisticated systems for improving the audio that the voice recognition gets in terms of cabling and other kinds of things that sometimes go wrong with wear and tear with audio cables, et cetera, and we've seen a reduction in our trouble tickets because of that.

We've done some upgrades and improvements that have to do with the security and data security part of the system. That's not specifically what anyone has mentioned today, so we'll skip over that. It's an important element for our growth and it's a quality improvement that we made.

But the biggest thing, I think, relative to our work with Florida here and Sprint is that we want to develop a way to address and respond to calls that customers find that are unacceptable or don't work for them. And a difficult thing for us is to be able to do that after the fact. It's difficult for us after a call is over for someone to say, you know, it really wasn't up to what I needed. We want -- the best thing for us is very specific information about the accuracy wasn't where it needed to be; there was too much delay for me to use the service.

So we've begun a program and we've modified our systems at CapTel internally within the platform so that we can track certain variables and automatically report them and alarm a supervisor if we reach a point in the call where certain variables are considered out of norm. And the one I want to talk about today and one of the first ones we're focusing on is the use of "unclear." Your report today was from this person who noticed that there were too many "unclears" for her to be comfortable with. So that's an important thing for us. So one of the first things we're targeting now is the use of "unclear." If a CA is using "unclear" too much in a call, that will automatically trigger an alarm. A supervisor will go over to that station or begin a monitoring session on that station. The supervisor will attempt to improve the situation for the CA or improve the call for the user. If they can do that, they

will. If they're not in a position to improve it, they will at least provide us detailed feedback about what it was about the call that was creating the use of "unclear." So that is an ongoing improvement we can make an adjustment for. So we've begun this process. We've just completed all the technical work. We've got a few cases going now, and we believe that we can and will provide an improved customer response to the, to some of the issues.

I want to end this explanation by making a very important point, and that is that the best thing that we can do or the most important thing for us is to get direct input from the customers about what it is on a particular call or service that they found unsatisfying or didn't meet their needs. We know that CapTel is used by a wide range of different kinds of hearing loss from profound to less profound. It's a new technology and a service and we're trying to understand the dynamics about what works for people and specifically what doesn't. And the more feedback we can get from users, the better we think we can do at meeting that. We know it's a pain to call and complain, but we really want to get the message out that it really helps us and encourage people to do it.

MR. MOSES: Yes.

MS. BORZELL: During the break I had an opportunity to speak with this gentleman -- I'm sorry, I didn't remember your name -- and with Barbara from Ultratec. And my biggest

concern about hard-of-hearing consumers, late-deafened consumers who use the CapTel and are asked to give feedback is how much work we have to go through. You're not going to get reliable feedback if the process is going to be too hard for the consumer. And I feel like if something can be put in place, a simple tool that we can use, we'll get the feedback. I mean, I'm sure there'd be cooperation in doing that. But make the tool fairly simple so that the feedback you get is not going to be in general terms, it's going to be in specific terms, and I think that's what you're talking about, and then make it simple and we'll give it back to you.

MR. MOSES: Okay.

MR. COLWELL: And we think that works as well.

MR. MOSES: Chris, go ahead.

Chris, did you have a question? Oh, okay.

MR. WAGNER: Okay. I have a question for you about the process for the testing. You said that you made 100 calls a month, test calls. Did you call the consumer themselves or did your staff? Was it staff-to-staff calls? I'm curious as to how that works. Because sometimes if you use the same people, the results are different if it's, like, a CapTel user to another person. You see what I'm saying? It could be a line issue, it could be whatever. I'm curious. I'm sorry, 98 percent, I have to admit, I don't believe that number. Because I've been here a long time, and also I'm a director of a center

that distributes CapTel, distributes Captel, and I hear people come in crying and complaining and they say they're very frustrated. And, like, what is the problem? Why are the directors, the providers getting different feedback than your numbers indicate? I'm puzzled as to what is the process here?

MS. OVERLAND: Yes, it is -- the test calls are staff-to-staff test calls. And the test calls aren't meant to really address technical issues that you may encounter based on the lines, you know, the lines or the networks that are being connected through the call, but it's really just to test the service given by each individual CA and their ability to caption the calls.

And with any telecommunications service you have to take into account, you know, who's using their cell phone with their convertible top down driving down the road. And, you know, of course that's going to impact the quality of the call. But we're not really looking to identify those types of situations as much as we are the CA's performance and ability to caption accurately and timely. And I hope that answers your question.

MR. MOSES: Yes, Kevin.

MR. COLWELL: I can add just a little bit, Chris. We understand when people first start to look at the test scores and testing that the numbers look a little odd, meaning 98 percent looks a little odd. And we understand the reason

for that. Early in the development of CapTel we started by measuring and beginning to understand how much accuracy people depend on for a quality of call. Now this is different for different people, but one thing I think is important to understand that we did learn is that for realtime captioning like this, for it to be an acceptable performance level, and, again, there's human variation here, the number needs to be very high. It needs to be in that 97, 98 range. When it falls below that, very, very quickly it becomes an unacceptable call.

So when you go from 98, which for the most part is good, it doesn't take very far below that to where it's not good. So when you have a response or have an experience or a report from somebody where the call is not as good as they would like it to be, the numbers don't have to be very far below that to result in that experience. That's part of the CapTel, I guess, sort of technology and service level management stuff. So the numbers, I think, are just typically higher than most people who have not been involved in that kind of testing before might expect at first.

MS. OVERLAND: And just to add to that, the 98 percent is based on how many errors compared to the total number of words that were spoken during that test call. And so when you, you know, when you take that comparison, the average may be a little higher than you expect. Especially if you're experiencing the errors, you know, you may think, oh, my gosh,

that was just horrible. But when you compare it to the number of words spoken through the entire conversation, the percentage may surprise you. And that was my experience when I began doing the test calls and as I became an acclimated user and as you're figuring the numbers.

MR. WAGNER: And I am a CapTel user too, and I admit that I can't remember the last time I touched it. Oh, can you guys sign?

I think there's a lot of frustration and I think she has a good point. The feedback from the community is embarrassing. How can we incorporate the community members in the testing process? I think that's the key, that's important to get the evaluation from the user's perspective. I'm thinking how -- I don't know if it's geography or it's the line itself or something. It's very strange. I don't know -- the quality compared to the numbers are very different.

MR. D'ANGELO: This is Tom. I want to add to that. As the Florida Relay Account Manager, I take this seriously. I want to see that all the customers have a good experience, even with the CapTel customers. And one thing that we're planning on doing is working with FTRI to do outreach and collect feedback to support this. Because, like you said, you know, the staff are crying and saying that they need a better service. And so we need that information, that feedback so we can get that to CapTel and not wait.

The second is FTRI is going to set up regional training workshops for CapTel customers and invite them to come to these workshops, talk with them, train them how to use it properly and collect their feedback at that time. So hopefully at that time it will increase our relationships or improve our relationships with the customer and improve the feedback process. So you should see that within the next few months. What do you think about that, Kathy? Would you come?

MS. BORZELL: I honestly don't think training is the biggest issue here. I think it's a small part of this issue. I think -- the CapTel is a complicated phone if you want to use all of the bells and whistles on it. But I do not believe that that is the biggest issue. So I don't know that that's a wise use of money.

I think -- I just feel like the people who use CapTel aren't necessarily using all those things that the training encompasses. They're using it just as a device to have a successful phone call. And what the problem is and why they're putting it in the drawer or the closet is because they have so many breakdowns in communication that it just isn't worth it. It's stressful. I can't tell you -- I've shared this before at these meetings. The telephone is a very stressful thing for me to use with my hearing loss level. I am not going to pick up a device that's going to add to that stress.

MR. MOSES: Go ahead, Barbara.

MS. DREYFUS: Kathy, we really appreciate that, the idea that the phone is very stressful. One of the things we're really trying to do -- training is great and we are going to move forward with that just to make sure people who originally get the phones are comfortable. But what we're doing, and we talked to you about it during the break, is setting up focus groups of users throughout the United States, people who are willing to work with us to give us feedback almost on a call-by-call basis. Because it's -- for us, if we just hear "there were too many unclears" or "I had a disconnect," it's too vague. We can't go back and look at that specific call. And as you can imagine, there are so many variables to CapTel; you've got the CA, you've got the service, you've got the phone line of both the CapTel user and the person they're talking to, you have regional differences. So we're trying to get groups together who are interested in giving feedback who we can make it simple to give feedback and will give us the feedback that will better able us to really analyze those calls that are having trouble. So we really appreciate that.

And if you have specific people that you know of, put them in contact with us or let us contact them. We have tried to put the CapTel customer service number on the phone to encourage people to call us. But I understand, if you're having a hard time with the phone, you don't want to make one more phone call. So the more feedback we can get from targeted

people, the more improvements we can make, the more we can understand the calling population.

MR. MOSES: Go ahead.

MS. BORZELL: If we can get this going, I'd just like to know what -- if we have a time line here. Because, as Chris expressed, and I'm sure as Julie could, as RDC centers themselves, giving out this equipment and getting such negative feedback, if we start these focus groups, how long is it going to take for them to start getting more positive feedback about the CapTel?

MS. DREYFUS: I'd love to say it won't take long, but I think that there will be many things that will all be working together. One is working with the RDCs on the screening of who's appropriate to be a CapTel user and who's not. We're doing follow-up to find out why people aren't using their phone. Perhaps it wasn't right for them and so they just put it in a drawer. Perhaps we've had situations where somebody just didn't know how to set it up and they were waiting for somebody to come. So we are very actively pursuing all of those areas. I don't know that we're going to be able to know one was more successful than another. But it's a very aggressive campaign that we're doing to see how much data we can get and how much change we can make.

MR. MOSES: Julie.

MS. CHURCH: I guess I'm just still a little confused

about how the testing is done. I understand that you're using a CA to test a CA basically and see how their, how their clarity and everything is. But what mechanisms do you use to actually survey CapTel users? Do you through your newsletter or through some of your database actually send out surveys or call people and ask them about their experience on the CapTel?

MS. DREYFUS: I'll let Loraine speak to the testing because she's the one who does it. We do call CapTel users when we can. Remember, we don't always have the information. When a distribution program gives out the piece of equipment, we don't know who it goes to. But there are certain states where we send out the phones directly because users buy them. We do follow-up. We follow-up and say, "How is it going? Any questions? Can we assist you in any way?" And we do find that even though people purchased it, they do still have questions. So the follow-up is significant. But, again, we don't always have the ability to follow up.

MS. CHURCH: But FTRI and Sprint has that ability because they know through their database what kind of equipment has been handed out or what kind of follow-up is being done from that angle.

MS. DREYFUS: FTRI would certainly know who they gave the phones to. It's a matter of manpower to follow up, I would imagine.

MR. MOSES: Chris.

MS. DREYFUS: Loraine, do you want to answer about the testing?

MR. WAGNER: I have a question. This is Chris. What I want to ask you is you pointed out that you do see the need for more -- or a need to work with the RDCs to help us identify the appropriate use of CapTel. And I disagree with you on that because we've been in the business for so long and we know what's appropriate. We give people the option, and it is the individual's choice to decide which equipment is best for them. And I think the most frustrating part is not the auditory part of the communicating, it's the text part. Anyone can use a phone, even with a severe hearing loss or a minor hearing loss. It's the text part that's really becoming complicated for people. Is that what I'm hearing? Is that correct? Kathy, is that correct? I know you're catching up.

MS. BORZELL: Yes.

MS. DREYFUS: Chris, that's a really good point. But one of the things that might make CapTel not appropriate for someone is if they are too reliant on text. If that's all that they get, if they don't have enough hearing to supplement it -- CapTel works with people who have hearing loss. So if you're -- it's kind of in-between the person who has no hearing and the person who has too much hearing. I don't know how much hearing you have. So you're completely deaf.

MR. WAGNER: I'm completely deaf but I speak well.

MS. DREYFUS: And it is perhaps that something like -- so then if you're completely deaf, you wouldn't care about the speed of the text. It wouldn't matter to you because you're not hearing the voice, you're only reading the text. People who hear the voice and read the text need it much faster. They want it so fast that they say, "We don't care about the accuracy." Okay. But, again, people who are more text dependent are more concerned about accuracy than people who are more hearing dependent because they fill in the misunderstanding. And it's a real -- it's like trying to please all the different needs or many more than just a TTY user at one time. So, again, the more feedback we get from the different kinds of users -- there's not just one CapTel user. There is a huge variety with a lot of variables. The more we understand it, the more we can accommodate it.

MR. MOSES: Tom.

MR. D'ANGELO: I would like to add, when I mentioned having the regional training -- seeing the word "training" was reacted to very defensively -- it would be more of a focus group or a workshop where people would come together and we would collect feedback and have discussion. At the same time we would have a specialist from CapTel there to train them on the phones on the side. It's something that I've seen happen and that should happen within the next few weeks. And James and I are working on that. I'll be happy to work with you,

Kathy, to make things happen if we can come to Tampa. That would be our first stop maybe around November.

MR. MOSES: Well, here's the one problem I've got with the whole thing. How much feedback do you need to know that the texting isn't accurate and -- I mean, you know all the variables. How many times do numerous people have to tell you? How many times? I mean, what do you need, a thousand people telling you? Will that make a difference?

MR. D'ANGELO: This is Tom. No, we're aware of the issues. It's just that we want to meet with the customers and work with them just to make sure that we hear directly from them the feedback and explain to them how to use the service properly. And as Barbara mentioned, some people may rely on hearing more rather than the text and so it would vary.

MR. MOSES: But you're talking about using the service properly. That's one issue. But the issue we're talking about mainly is the quality of the text captioning, and that's not a use of the user. They're just sitting there reading it. So I think you're dancing around the issue a little bit.

Julie.

MS. CHURCH: And I kind of have an issue with this whole coming out and retraining people on CapTel in that the regional distribution centers are tasked with the job of training people on the equipment and spend a great deal of time

doing that. And it's time-consuming both for the, for the employee of the regional distribution center, but also for the consumer. And if they're -- they're supposed to be leaving the regional distribution center understanding how the equipment works. And if they're not, then we're asking them to take more time to come back in. Some of them are transportation challenged. And I just don't see where it's going to provide more benefit than could be provided through the regional distribution centers if it's being done properly.

MR. MOSES: Maggie.

MS. SCHOOLAR: Thank you for all the feedback. I know we had this similar discussion at the last TASA meeting, and I really appreciate how up-front everyone is with their feedback.

CapTel is a service that for some people they absolutely love. And we can see by our minutes and we can see by the amount of users, for some people CapTel is a perfect service. For some people it is not. And we do have other methods of making phone calls outside of CapTel. What we've got going on right now is we're delivering the best CapTel service we can today. I'm not saying that there's not room for improvement or that we're not working continuously. Sprint is working, CapTel is working to try to make it better. But we do have limitations in that it's voice-to-text technology, and there are some very serious limitations in there that we may

never get to 100 percent accuracy. We may never get to a service that doesn't have "unclear" in there. So for folks who have difficulty and can't see beyond a certain percentage of errors, then maybe VCO is a better service using the traditional relay service or an Internet-based service or a video service. But for CapTel right now Sprint is completely dedicated to making it the best service we can, but it is not perfect.

So our idea to go out to train is not so much to retrain as to explain to people what the service can do for you, but also explain some of our other services because maybe CapTel is a little too scary or doesn't work well, maybe you need an agent in there to help explain the call and to make the call progress, which is what VCO gives you. So there are different ways of using the phone. And I'm not saying this as a cop-out and I'm not saying we're not working on it. We're committed to continuing to test it, taking your feedback right now. And Rick had given us feedback this morning about the 98 percent accuracy also. He would like to see us evaluate the number of errors in a different way. And so we are going to provide some -- a little bit different details as well. And CTI continues to monitor their system and work on their platform. But we are working on it and we're trying to come up with solutions, and that's part of these testing and training groups to bring people in. And if CapTel is not the right

service for them, get them on something else.

MR. MOSES: Kathy.

MS. BORZELL: With respect to the focus groups, we -- I thought what we were talking about is having a focus group give feedback on live calls that they make and not necessarily training groups, which may be another, another, another area to focus on, as Tom was bringing up. Focus groups though would be kind of more intense and be actual live call experiences. That's what I'm, I'm interpreting that to mean.

And there was another point that I wanted to bring up. Oh. If we do have these more in-depth training sessions bringing people together for training, all I really would like to see is realistic expectations. In the past I've seen CapTel being lauded as a device to perform way above what it can just for everything you've said in the past, right now. In the past I feel like it's been, you know, marketed as a tool that it is not. It maybe some day can be, but right now the expectations have to be realistic.

MR. MOSES: Okay. Anybody else have anything? Tom?

MR. D'ANGELO: Are you done? I just wanted to add a few more things about some earlier comments that Chris had said, and Bob had spoken about Internet relay and video relay. I wanted to share my experience.

I've been here in Florida for a year travelling all over the state, and almost every time I give a presentation on

Florida Relay, they always ask me about Internet relay and video relay. They want some more information on that, so I shift my focus towards that. I just wanted to throw this out --

MR. MOSES: Tom, could you slow down a little bit?

MR. D'ANGELO: -- food for thought that the technology is out there and people are using it, including myself with my pager, I use that quite a bit with Internet relay, and I just wanted to throw that out. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to be here and share that with you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. Okay. Let's move on to the next topic on the agenda. We're going to give the TASA members opportunity if there's any other type of complaints that you all are hearing about that you want to express to us. You've pretty well told us what you've heard on CapTel, I believe. Are there any other problem areas that we need to be aware of? Julie?

MS. CHURCH: Totally different subject. I'm a member of the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And at the last meeting that we held in Gainesville, during the public hearing part of it somebody had, had stated that they're concerned about the size of the type that's being used on, about telephone bill inserts, and that older people are not, they can't see well enough to understand what's on those inserts. So I just wanted to make sure that the people

who, on this council who can make a change on that might be aware of that.

MR. MOSES: Okay. James, did you --

MR. FORSTALL: I think what she's referring to is every year telephone companies are supposed to put inserts in the phone bill about TASA and relay services. Is that what you're referring to?

MR. MOSES: Okay. Any other complaints you're hearing of? Okay.

All right. Are there any topics you would like to see on the next meeting that we will have? And I expect the next meeting to be around mid-April, if that's all right with everybody. I can email you later when it's closer to the time to get an exact date because I'm sure all of you don't have your calendars or know what's going to be on your schedules until a little closer to time. But we'll look at it about mid-April. And, again, if there's any topics that you want to discuss or if you can let me know now or in-between now and then, we can -- yes, Chris.

MR. WAGNER: I'm sure I'll have an update on the legislative activities we're doing at that time.

MR. MOSES: That will be great. All right. If no one else has anything further, I think we can conclude. Thank you for coming. And please get your expense reports back to us. You can either mail them to us or however you want to get

it to us. Thank you.

(Concluded at 3:22 p.m.)

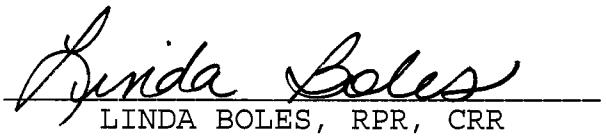
STATE OF FLORIDA)
: CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR, Official Commission Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard 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 constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

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

DATED THIS 17th DAY OF OCTOBER 2006.



LINDA BOLES, RPR, CRR
FPSC Official Commission Reporter
(850) 413-6734