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PLACE: Gerald L. Gunter Building
Room 105
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
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REPORTED BY: LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR
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A P P E A R A N C E S

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CURTIS WILLIAMS, PSC staff
PAMELA PAGE, PSC staff
JEFF BATES, PSC staff
CAYCE HINTON, PSC staff
GREG FOGLEMAN, PSC staff
MARK LONG, PSC staff
JAMES FORSTALL, FTRI
JEFF BRANCH, Sprint Relay

TELEPHONIC APPEARANCES:

RICK KOTTLER, Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Services of the Treasure Coast, Inc.
CHERYL RHODES, Florida Deaf/Blind Association
TIM WATA, Florida Association of the Deaf

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Good afternoon, everyone.
3 This is Curtis Williams, and I'm with the Office of
4 Industry Development and Market Analysis here at
5 the Florida Public Service Commission. We are
6 going to start the TASA Advisory Committee meeting
7 at this time.

8 Joining me on staff is Pamela Page, with
9 the General Counsel's Office, and Jeff Bates with
10 the -- also with the Office of Industry Development
11 and Market Analysis.

12 Everyone should have received a copy of
13 the meeting agenda and the presentations via email,
14 so we will proceed with today's meeting
15 accordingly.

16 Before we move any further, at this time
17 I would like to ask Ms. Page to read the notice.

18 **MS. PAGE:** Welcome. Pursuant to notice
19 issued, this time, date, and place was set for this
20 meeting of the Telecommunications Access System Act
21 Advisory Committee in Docket No. 20140029-TP and
22 Docket No. 20170039-TP.

23 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Before we move further, I
24 would just like to go over a few initial meeting
25 notes. A transcript will be made available of

1 today's meeting. Please make sure your microphone
2 is on, for those individuals that are here, when
3 speaking. The green light should be on. Also,
4 please silence your cell phones during today's
5 meeting, and please state your name before speaking
6 so the court reporter can correctly identify you.

7 And for the participants on the phone, we
8 ask that if your -- if you put your phone on mute,
9 please make sure that you don't have any type of
10 music on hold and just be aware of any background
11 noise that you may have where you're located. If
12 there are any problems, we'll let you know. But so
13 far everything sounds good.

14 At this time we'll go ahead and take
15 formal appearances. Again, I'm Curtis Williams
16 with the Office of Industry Development and Market
17 Analysis. And we'll proceed at the table here, and
18 then we'll ask the individuals that are on the line
19 to identify yourselves.

20 **MR. BATES:** I'm Jeff Bates, Commission
21 staff.

22 **MS. PAGE:** Pamela Page, Office of the
23 General Counsel.

24 **MR. HINTON:** Cayce Hinton, Commission
25 staff.

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

2 **MR. FORSTALL:** James Forstall with FTRI.

3 **MR. BRANCH:** Jeff Branch, client director
4 of Sprint.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** We also have Greg Fogleman
6 here with the Public Service Commission. And we
7 can proceed with those individuals that are
8 participating by phone.

9 **MR. KOTTLER:** This is Rick Kottler down
10 in Jensen Beach.

11 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Rick.

12 **MR. WATA:** Hello. My name is Tim Wata,
13 and I'm a representative for the Florida
14 Association of the Deaf.

15 **MS. RHODES:** Hi there. My name is Cheryl
16 Rhodes, representing Florida Deaf/Blind Agency.

17 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Is there anyone else
18 participating by phone?

19 (No response.)

20 Hearing none, we will at this time
21 proceed with the presentations. The staff, we've
22 prepared a presentation on updates on activities
23 and events here at the Public Service Commission
24 and also with the FCC. When we're completed,
25 Mr. James Forstall with FTRI will provide a

1 presentation on FTRI's annual report and their
2 activities since our last meeting. And Mr. Branch
3 is here with Sprint, will provide an overview of
4 Sprint's activities as highlighted in the
5 presentation that we forwarded to everyone.

6 So at this time, as far as for PSC
7 updates, I will give a brief overview. And when
8 I'm completed, Mr. Bates will present an update on
9 FCC activities.

10 So as we have before you, for the PSC
11 updates, the -- in Docket No. 20170039, which is
12 the request for proposals docket, we provided an
13 overview of that proceeding at our April meeting
14 where we explained to everyone that Sprint had
15 notified the Commission that it was not going to
16 proceed with the current contract under the current
17 rates. And so the Commission initiated a request
18 for proposals to look into selecting a new provider
19 or putting, putting the proposal out for bid and to
20 address all proposals.

21 The -- on May, formally on May 11th,
22 2017, the PSC released its RFP, and we received
23 responses or proposals in response to the RFP from
24 Hamilton Relay and also from Sprint. Those were
25 the two proposals received, we received. And

1 during the months of June and July, the Public
2 Service Commission staff evaluated those proposals.
3 We had a team of evaluators here at the Commission,
4 and they did a thorough analysis and evaluation of
5 the proposals from a technical standpoint and from
6 a pricing standpoint. And during August, staff
7 developed a recommendation and presented that
8 recommendation to the Commission at the
9 September 7th, 2017, Agenda Conference, where the
10 Commission voted to award the new three-year
11 contract to provide Relay service in Florida to
12 Sprint.

13 So Sprint -- technically the current
14 contract -- we're still operating under the current
15 contract that was awarded in 2014. But, again,
16 starting in March 1st of 2018, we'll be operating
17 under a new contract but still with Sprint.

18 The next docket that I want to cover is
19 the Docket 20140029, which is the current docket
20 that we're operating under. And in that docket,
21 the main event that occurred since our last meeting
22 was the Commission's consideration of FTRI's
23 budget. And the Commission analyzed and reviewed
24 FTRI's budget, as we do each year, and the
25 Commission voted to reduce the, the monthly

1 surcharge by one penny to ten cents for fiscal year
2 2017/2018 effective October 1st, 2017, and required
3 the local exchange companies, the competitive local
4 exchange companies and the shared tenant service
5 providers to bill the reduced surcharge.
6 Specifically the PSC required FTRI to reduce its
7 proposed fiscal year 2017/2018 budget by \$117,954.

8 At this time Mr. Bates will provide an
9 update of activities at the FCC.

10 **MR. BATES:** In Order -- Jeff Bates,
11 Commission staff. In Order 17-445 released on
12 May 10th, 2017, the Consumer and Governmental
13 Affairs Bureau sought comment on the Interstate
14 Telecommunications Relay Services Fund
15 administrator's proposed provider compensation
16 rates, funding requirement, and carrier
17 contribution factor for July 1 through -- 2017
18 through June 30th of 2018, and comments were due on
19 June 1st, 2017.

20 **MR. WILLIAMS:** If we can just take a
21 quick minute. Someone on the phone -- we are
22 getting some background information -- background
23 noise. It's, it's not too distracting to, to us
24 participating here, but for the court reporter it
25 is causing some degree of difficulty. So we'll ask

1 that you check your equipment there, your
2 microphone. But it's more of an echo noise that
3 we're, we're getting feedback on. Thank you.

4 **INTERPRETER:** I think it's an
5 interpreter's mike.

6 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. We think it may be
7 from, Cheryl, your interpreter. We -- someone
8 stated that it may be from the microphone with,
9 with your interpreter. So not sure that is the
10 case, but we'll, we'll just ask that you just
11 check, check your equipment there. Thank you.

12 Are you still there, Cheryl?

13 **MS. RHODES:** Yes, yes, yes, yes, I am.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. And it sounds --
15 everything sounds much better, so we'll proceed
16 with Mr. Bates' presentation. Thank you.

17 **MR. BATES:** On June 30th, 2017, the
18 Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau adopted
19 Order DA 17-642, which determined the TRS funding
20 requirement of approximately \$1.3 billion and a
21 carrier contribution factor of .02289.

22 Effective July 1st, 2017, the per-minute
23 compensation rates became \$2.92 for traditional
24 interstate TRS, \$4.05 for interstate
25 speech-to-speech Relay service, \$1.95 for

1 interstate captioned telephone service and Internet
2 Protocol captioned telephone service, and \$1.34 for
3 IP Relay.

4 Next slide. In Order 17-86, the FCC
5 adopted a four-year compensation plan for VRS
6 providers from July 1, 2017, to June 30th, 2021.
7 The rules were amended to allow server-based
8 routing of VRS and point-to-point video calls, and
9 the FCC deleted rules providing for a neutral video
10 service platform.

11 On July 19th, 2017, the Consumer and
12 Governmental Affairs Bureau released DA 17-697,
13 which reminded state telecommunications Relay
14 programs to seek recertification for the Relay
15 programs. PSC staff filed Florida's
16 Recertification Application with the FCC on
17 September 28th, 2017, and the bureau will make the
18 applications available for public review and
19 comment and will issue certification renewals on a
20 rolling basis from May 2018 through July 2018.

21 Finally, on August 24th, 2017, in Order
22 DA 17-802, the FCC adopted compensation rates for
23 Video Relay Service. In addition to the rate
24 change, the order amended rules to permit
25 server-based routing and point-to-point calls and

1 authorized continued use of money from the TRS Fund
2 for research and development.

3 The report and order and final rules
4 became effective September 21st, 2017, and the
5 order requires providers to comply with a VRS
6 Provider Interoperability Profile by December 20th,
7 2017.

8 And my last slide. On October 6th, 2017,
9 the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
10 released DA 17-980 seeking comment on the petition
11 filed by the TRS Advisory Council seeking
12 reconsideration of the 2017 VRS Rate Order to
13 compensate VRS providers for an eight-month trial.
14 The petition requests rates be increased to
15 \$5.29 per conversation minute during the trial
16 period.

17 In addition, the petition requested
18 reconsideration of the deadlines for VRS providers
19 to notify the FCC of their intent to participate in
20 the trial. And that's all for the FCC updates.

21 **MR. WILLIAMS:** So we're available if
22 there are any questions regarding activities here
23 at the Public Service Commission or at the FCC. We
24 can --

25 **MR. WATA:** Yes, I do have a question.

1 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Who's --

2 **MR. WATA:** This is Tim Wata.

3 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Mr. Wata.

4 **MR. WATA:** Could you see -- could you
5 please look at page no. 12?

6 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay, we're there.

7 **MR. BATES:** Recertification.

8 **MR. WATA:** Okay. I understand that the
9 FCC removed portions of the rules regarding the
10 neutral video conversation (sic) platform. Could
11 you please explain to me what that means, the
12 neutral video communication service platform?

13 **MR. BATES:** FCC 17-86, I think, is the
14 slide you were referring to, slide 11.

15 **MR. WILLIAMS:** 11, yes. Page 11, that's
16 --

17 **MR. WATA:** Yes, that's correct.

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Okay.

19 **MR. BATES:** According to the introduction
20 from the FCC's order, the rules providing for
21 neutral video -- they deleted portions of the rules
22 providing for neutral video communication service
23 platform, but it was repealed.

24 **MR. HINTON:** Do we have the definition of
25 what that term refers to?

1 **MR. WATA:** This is Tim Wata here. Yes,
2 I'd like an explanation of what that term means.

3 **MR. BATES:** Okay. Okay. In the 2013 VRS
4 Reform Order, the Commission adopted rules to
5 establish a neutral VRS platform that would allow a
6 registered VRS user to use VRS access technology to
7 make and receive VRS and point-to-point calls
8 through a VRS CA service provider. The neutral VRS
9 platform would provide user registration and
10 validation; authentication; authorization; ACD
11 platform functions; routing, including emergency
12 routing; call setup; mapping; call features such as
13 call forwarding and video mail; and such other
14 features and functions not directly related to the
15 provision of VRS CA services.

16 Vertically integrated VRS providers would
17 not be obligated to utilize the neutral VRS
18 platform and would be --

19 **INTERPRETER:** Could you say that last
20 sentence again, please, for the interpreter?

21 **MR. BATES:** Sure. The neutral VRS
22 platform would provide user registration and
23 validation; authentication; authorization; ACD
24 platform functions; routing, including emergency
25 routing; call functions not directly related to the

1 provision of VRS CA services.

2 And then the last sentence, vertically
3 integrated VRS providers would not be obligated to
4 utilize the neutral VRS platform and would be able
5 to continue to deliver VRS over their existing
6 platform consistent with the Commission's rules.

7 **MR. WATA:** Tim Wata here. I understand
8 clearly.

9 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. Are there any
10 additional questions?

11 (No response.)

12 If not, we will proceed at this time with
13 Mr. James Forstall's presentation of FTRI's 2017
14 annual report.

15 **MR. FORSTALL:** Okay. Good afternoon,
16 everyone. It's a pleasure to be here to present to
17 you the fiscal year 2016/2017 annual report from
18 Florida Telecommunications Relay.

19 The first slide you see are the client
20 services. The report is the number of equipment
21 distribution program services provided by FTRI
22 during fiscal year 2016/17 with a total of 23,995.
23 And the different types of services that FTRI
24 provides are new, modified, exchange, follow-up,
25 and return.

1 A new is when a client will come into the
2 program for the very first time, and they remain a
3 client of the program as long as they have
4 equipment that is loaned to them.

5 A modified is when a client who has a
6 piece of equipment and for some reason is not able
7 to utilize it anymore because maybe perhaps their
8 hearing is not as, not as great as it once was or
9 progressively decreased, so they might need to
10 modify to a different piece of equipment.

11 And a change would mean that if they
12 have -- whatever equipment they have currently
13 needs to be replaced due to malfunctioning,
14 defective, or for whatever reason the phone is not
15 working for them.

16 And return would mean that a client no
17 longer is interested in remaining in the program
18 for various reasons such as moving out of the
19 state. They might have passed on or they decide
20 they no longer need the equipment due to technology
21 changes.

22 And follow-up is when an individual may
23 need additional training on a piece of equipment
24 that is provided through the FTRI program or any
25 other type of assistance that's not listed under

1 the other services.

2 The next slide just shows you the past
3 three years. We have, have been viewing a decline
4 in the services over the past three years. It's
5 pretty significant from last year to this year.

6 The next slide is new client services.
7 FTRI served 11,024 new clients during the reporting
8 period. Clients certified as eligible for the FTRI
9 program are classified into four distinct groups,
10 and these are the qualifications that we recognize
11 them as being either deaf, hard of hearing, speech
12 impaired, or dual sensory impaired.

13 The dual sensory impaired, we have, as
14 you'll notice, is zero because anybody that
15 contacts the FTRI program seeking equipment, they
16 will be referred to the iCanConnect program. And
17 we do have the capability to provide them with
18 equipment, should they need it. And the only --
19 actually the only piece of equipment that FTRI had
20 available was the deaf/blind communicator, which
21 has been discontinued a couple of years ago. So
22 you will not see -- probably -- due to the fact
23 that we don't offer current technology equipment,
24 you will probably not see any increase or growth in
25 that particular category. We will continue to

1 refer them to the iCanConnect program.

2 New client services have declined as well
3 over the last three years, as you can see. And the
4 majority of the reason would be for -- again, it
5 goes back to not being able to offer the latest
6 technology. We continue to provide equipment that
7 works with traditional landline services, so more
8 and more people are migrating to other and newer
9 different technology.

10 The next slide is equipment distributed.
11 FTRI distributed both new and refurbished
12 equipment. Equipment distributed during fiscal
13 year 2016/17 numbered 19,715 units. 95 percent,
14 almost 96 percent of the equipment distributed were
15 volume control amplified telephones.

16 CapTel makes up the next largest group at
17 1.3 percent. And, again, this is the 840 PLUS that
18 FTRI is allowed, permitted to distribute through
19 the program. And the 840 PLUS has both the analog
20 and internet version; however, at this point in
21 time, the analog version is the only particular
22 service that's allowed through the CapTel 840 PLUS.

23 The ARS is an audible ring signal. We
24 have TTYs, VRS, and others. TTYs, mostly we will
25 distribute those when someone who currently has one

1 needs a replacement.

2 The next slide is the total equipment
3 distributed. Again, we'll see a decline in the
4 number of equipment distributed. And, again, that
5 goes back to the type of equipment we have
6 available.

7 The next slide is the outreach. FTRI
8 conducted 1,410 different outreach activities
9 during that year. 949 were off-site distribution.
10 An off-site distribution is classified as when a
11 regional distribution center has an event or an
12 activity outside of their office. It used to be
13 that the client would travel to the regional
14 distribution centers to get served, and they still
15 do in some cases. But most cases -- we are seeing
16 more and more centers going out to the community
17 and offering the outreach activities and offsite
18 distribution so they can be closer to the
19 community.

20 And when a client does call into our
21 office, for instance, requesting a nearby center,
22 we have the capability to pull up real quick on our
23 computer database to identify events that are
24 happening near their zip code area so we can direct
25 the client to that particular event. So that

1 works, that works real well.

2 Of the 1,410 outreach activities, again,
3 distribution makes up the majority of it. Dual
4 events is an -- either a presentation distribution
5 or an exhibit distribution. And what that means is
6 if someone were to come here and do a presentation
7 to this particular group, they would explain the
8 FTRI program, how it works, all the features, the
9 benefits of the program. And if anybody in the
10 room were to qualify for the program, they would be
11 able to pick up their phone after the meeting or
12 after the presentation. So we call that a dual
13 event because we're doing two things at one time.

14 And we also have exhibits where centers
15 will go to health fairs, different events whereby
16 they will secure a private room away from the main
17 exhibit area. So that is a more quiet environment
18 for the individual to receive the equipment and to
19 conduct the paperwork as well as training on the
20 equipment.

21 SP stands for service providers. And
22 this year -- last year we had 26 of them when a
23 center will go and meet with a particular service
24 provider. It could be anybody who certifies the
25 FTRI application. And we have a list of

1 eight different qualified certifiers that are
2 allowed to certify the application according to
3 TASA.

4 And this year we're focusing more on
5 meeting with the service providers to get them to
6 assist us with referring clients to the individual
7 RDCs or to the FTRI program. And we have seen an
8 uptick in that particular service this year
9 already. And that's going to be our primary focus
10 because we feel like going forward that's going to
11 be key for the FTRI program sustainability to have
12 referrals made from the service provider. A
13 service provider could be either an audiologist, a
14 hearing aid specialist, a speech pathologist,
15 anybody that works in the field with hearing loss
16 that traditionally refer people to the FTRI
17 program.

18 And the reason we're focusing on the
19 service provider more so this year than in the past
20 is because we do have competition out in the field
21 with other captioned telephone providers such as IP
22 CTS providers. You have Hamilton, Sprint, you have
23 CapTel, CaptionCall, and ClearCaptions all out
24 there competing for the same clients. It is
25 unfortunate because a lot of the captioned

1 telephone companies do not refer people to the
2 state program, but that is something that's been
3 going on for quite some time.

4 The other particular outreach activity is
5 the business partnership program. We had eight new
6 businesses sign up for information that they can
7 download from our website about the Relay, Florida
8 Relay service.

9 And the other is 104. It could be that a
10 regional distribution center may apply for outreach
11 funding through different mechanisms. For
12 instance, we do have two methods that we classify
13 as a presentation equipment distribution and
14 exhibit and equipment distribution, and we have
15 prices for those.

16 And so when a center wants to do
17 something that's outside of that, we consider it as
18 other or a non-contractual outreach, which means
19 that a center may go to a particular event and we
20 might not compensate them for that time and
21 service. But they will go in and do the service
22 with the hopes of reaching out to more people, and
23 then the follow-up services will be -- will pay for
24 the services that -- when equipment is distributed.

25 And, you know, in some cases in the past

1 if, for instance, as an exhibit, they would go to
2 an exhibit, and this was before we changed the
3 rules on the exhibit because of the 2013 audit that
4 was conducted by the Public Service Commission, it
5 was recommended that we tighten up the outreach
6 activities. So, therefore, we -- if they would go
7 to an exhibit, we would hardly see any results from
8 that exhibit, although the centers were actually --
9 or the individuals were being paid for the service.
10 So we changed it to include distribution. So while
11 they're there, we can make sure we get the clients
12 served.

13 And it makes sense as well because while
14 we were out in the field, if we did talk to some
15 people, we'd say, "Well, come back to our center or
16 this location to get the equipment." And often
17 we'd find the clients would not do that for
18 whatever reason. It may be transportation or time.
19 So we -- while we had them in the room, we wanted
20 to go ahead and serve them. And so that's worked
21 really well for us. That's why you'll see a lot of
22 offsite distribution because more and more centers
23 are taking their services and equipment out to the
24 field.

25 The next slide shows you the total

1 outreach distribution. Of course, we're seeing a
2 decline again in that outreach activity. We have
3 decreased the funding over last year, so that's the
4 result of -- you're seeing less and less activities
5 being conducted. We hope that we are able to
6 request additional funding for future activities.
7 So we have seen a significant decrease in that over
8 last year.

9 The next slide is some of the other
10 services provided. FTRI processed over
11 24,933 customer service calls. We received
12 2,674 inquiries through the FTRI website. This is
13 something that we've noticed that has grown over
14 the last couple of years. More and more people are
15 going to the website to either apply online through
16 the website. And how that works is we created a
17 process a couple of years ago, and it's called the
18 application request process, where a client can go
19 in to a landing page and they will fill out a good
20 portion of the fields. And it's not really an
21 application, but it can be transferred to a PDF
22 version of an application because the application
23 does require that it be certified.

24 So when they submit that request, it
25 comes to our office and we review it, and we're

1 able to capture the individual right then on the
2 spot -- "How did you hear about the program?" -- so
3 they can make that selection right there. And that
4 comes into our database and we review it. Our
5 staff in the FTRI office will review it. And
6 depending on where they live, we will refer them
7 right back to the regional distribution center.
8 And they -- this is all done through the website.

9 And they have the capability of
10 contacting the client. They have their name, their
11 addresses, the -- just quite a bit of information
12 that will be carried over to the application. So
13 when a client goes into the center, a client who is
14 listed in what we call the application request, AR,
15 when they go into a center, the center will
16 automatically do a search in the master search.
17 And if they're in the application, it will pull
18 them up. So all the center has to do is open it
19 up. And if it's the same person, hit the "create
20 client" button, and it will go right into the
21 client's file and half the information is already
22 saved in their profile. And then they can proceed
23 to provide the equipment selection and training.

24 And -- or if they do a map to search and
25 it doesn't come up on the AR, they will come up

1 through the client's, which means that they're
2 already an assisted client. Then they can proceed
3 to provide other services for that individual.

4 And through this process, whenever we
5 advertise on television -- I'm sorry, not
6 television -- newspaper or any other process, we
7 always put the FTRI.org/free URL so the client can
8 go directly to the page. And I think that has
9 helped increase the number of people that are
10 applying online. So we're excited about that.

11 We also processed more than 73,056
12 EDP forms. And what that means is the centers
13 still capture the application on a paper -- in a
14 paper format and they process it. And all those
15 applications come to FTRI, and we review them for
16 accuracy, verification, et cetera. We have a
17 person in the office that verifies all the
18 applications that come in. And we are moving
19 closer and closer to hopefully have all that done
20 online. We have some challenges that we have to
21 address with that, but we are getting closer to
22 that. And I think working more closely with
23 service providers will allow us to get there
24 quicker.

25 We also provided over 800 hours of

1 training and support service to the regional
2 distribution centers. We have 23 centers
3 throughout the state that we contract with.
4 They're non-profit agencies such as Center for
5 Independent Living, deaf service centers, speech
6 and hearing centers, Easter Seals. And it's normal
7 for turnover to occur at the centers, and usually
8 per quarter on average we have anywhere from 12 to
9 13 turnovers throughout the state per quarter at
10 all of these centers. So we're constantly
11 providing all that training and support services to
12 the RDCs, and we do that mainly through webcasting.

13 And any time they want additional
14 training, we'll get on the phone with them or we'll
15 provide them step-by-step support services. We're
16 there for the RDCs to provide them with any help
17 and assistance they need with the FTRI program.

18 Other important facts, continued to place
19 a high priority on protecting the integrity of the
20 client information by making security enhancements
21 to the system. Operated within the budget
22 requirements. We received high marks from the
23 external auditors for financial records and
24 internal controls.

25 Next slide, please. Here are examples of

1 the insert ads that we have been running for the
2 last few years actually. This is -- we have a new
3 one out there, and I don't know if I brought a copy
4 of it with me, but we do have a new ad. We've
5 ran -- we've used this particular ad for the last
6 two years, and it was time to freshen it up. And I
7 think the result from the new ad has been really
8 good. But these are 8-1/2 x 11 full-page inserts,
9 back and front in full color, and it has worked
10 really well.

11 This is actually the best -- one of the
12 best outreach methods that we have going for us
13 right now because the majority of our target
14 population still reads the newspaper. And so they
15 can take -- pull this out of the newspaper and hang
16 on to it for a while. And there'll be -- months
17 will go by before they come back to a center and
18 they'll have it in their hands. So -- and if they
19 call the office, they call our number, we know
20 right away to select insert ad through the AR. And
21 then again when the, when the center clicks "create
22 client," that same information is carried over so
23 we can make sure we capture the same referral
24 source.

25 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, Curtis Williams.

1 Mr. Forstall, you mentioned you, you were
2 pleased with the responses you've been getting from
3 the newspaper ad. Can you just kind of briefly
4 explain a little bit how you measure the, the
5 responses that you receive from the ads?

6 **MR. FORSTALL:** Okay. We -- sure. We,
7 we -- for the longest time -- up until January of
8 2017 the center -- the calls would go directly to
9 the regional distribution centers, and they would
10 be the ones that take the call and they would be
11 the ones to provide the service or make
12 appointments for the clients, et cetera.

13 And one of the things that we were
14 missing throughout the process was the fact that
15 people who saw the ads were calling and it wasn't
16 being captured as a contact. So we decided to do
17 that in January. All calls will come directly to
18 our office throughout the whole state. This way we
19 get a call and we'll put them in the AR and
20 identify them as -- if they tell us they saw it in
21 the newspaper ad, we would go ahead and select
22 "insert ad referral source." And so that, that
23 allows us to make sure that every call that comes
24 in from people who saw the newspaper, we're
25 actually able to capture that.

1 The other way -- there are a couple of
2 ways that we capture, but one of them is the AR.
3 They come in, they call in and we record them and
4 refer them to the local center. The other way is
5 when they call and they saw the ad but maybe they
6 don't realize that the phone they have is from
7 FTRI, so they actually might be an existing client
8 that saw the ad and called us and said, "You know
9 what?" And we'll pull them up right then on the
10 spot. We have their name and phone number. We'll
11 put them in and they'll come up on our database,
12 and we can tell them, "You've got a phone from us,"
13 so and so. And so they might forget, you know, or
14 they might not remember exactly where they got it
15 from.

16 And so we -- from there we either decide
17 if they needed a replacement or if they need more
18 assistance. If they need an exchange, a
19 replacement, we put them into customer care, and
20 then we go through the process of troubleshooting
21 their phone with them or providing them with an
22 exchange. And we'll refer them to the regional
23 distribution center.

24 But the point is with this is that the
25 person actually saw the ad and it reminds them of

1 our program. So we do capture that as well. And
2 we also capture when individuals -- let me make
3 myself a note so I don't forget what I want to
4 say -- who call us and they might not even qualify
5 for the program, but they saw the ad. So we will
6 capture those folks in a call log. And we got
7 quite a few of those as well. We get people
8 calling from out of state. How they saw the ad, I
9 don't know. Maybe someone else called them and
10 told them, "Hey, how about this?"

11 But we also do a client survey, and
12 that's where we get most of the people who have
13 actually been served. They are -- we pull that
14 report from the client survey. Then we have the
15 application request database, data from people who
16 are in there and are still waiting to be served.
17 So we don't remove them from that particular
18 database until so many -- sometime later. We tried
19 everything and for whatever reason it doesn't work
20 out, but we do capture that they saw the ad.

21 The other way, if they go to the website,
22 we're able to capture that as well. So we have --
23 let's see, I've got several reports that make up my
24 report that indicates -- I pulled the wrong report,
25 but I can just give you an idea. The last quarter

1 of -- from April 1st to June 30th, 2017, the number
2 of contacts just for that quarter, not for the
3 whole year, I do have the report for you today, but
4 this is just for that quarter from April 1st, 2017,
5 to June 30th, we had 3,214 contacts. So that's how
6 many people actually saw the ad and contacted us.
7 So we were able to capture it in our database.

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

9 **MR. FORSTALL:** We, we are going to try
10 and experiment a little bit this year with changing
11 the ads. Well, it's interesting because when you
12 talk -- when I talk with the RDCs, we do have
13 meetings with them. We try to include them in the
14 discussion to get input: What are some of the
15 better ways that we can do to improve the ads, et
16 cetera?

17 For the most part, having them call our
18 office has been working really well because we know
19 we capture all the information. Several centers
20 have said that they would, they would be happy to
21 capture that information and put it in AR or the
22 call log. They have the capability to do that
23 through our website. So we have one center that
24 works in South Florida that does a really, really
25 good job of doing that, and so we're pleased with

1 that.

2 And the reason we were thinking of maybe
3 listing the, the center's address, maybe not
4 necessarily the phone number but the address of the
5 center, so that the individual could say, "Hey,
6 this is in my area. You know, I don't have to go
7 to Tallahassee or whatever." Because even though
8 they're calling our number and we will refer them,
9 but it might help the individual feel better or a
10 little bit more secure or interested in pursuing
11 having a local address. So we're doing that and
12 we're going to see how that works out. So that's
13 something we want to try and experiment with them.
14 We'll be able to compare whether with our address,
15 our phone number, and with their address and our
16 phone number. So we want to -- it's just a few
17 centers, especially in the rural areas, where they
18 might not have, like, a center close by. And so
19 when they see it, they might more likely contact us
20 if they see a local address. So that's something
21 we're going to try to experiment with.

22 The next, next slide are the Spanish ads.
23 The same ads were, were in Spanish, and we ran them
24 in the Miami area. But we've also been really --
25 the response has been really, really great. And so

1 we have a center working with us there. And the
2 way that one works is because we don't have any
3 Spanish-speaking staff, the calls for these ads
4 will go directly to Clarity, which is one of our
5 providers, equipment providers who has a team of
6 Spanish -- bilingual staff that can take the calls
7 for us.

8 And what they do is when they get the
9 call, they go to a landing page specifically
10 designed for them, and it gives them instructions
11 on what to put in there. And once they submit
12 that, it comes to our office, and once again we're
13 able to refer them to the nearest center for
14 services. The center that works serving these also
15 has Spanish-speaking staff.

16 And we're really -- we're excited about
17 this opportunity 'cause we just started doing this
18 last -- almost a year ago. And it really took off
19 in January, February, March, and, and so we want
20 to -- we had to at least suspend it for a couple of
21 months so the center can actually get caught up
22 with the number of people waiting to get served.
23 And we're going to continue to try this, but right
24 now it's been suspended so they can get caught up
25 and we can provide those individuals with services.

1 But it has been -- it is pleasing to know that the
2 population out there still, you know, needs the
3 services.

4 The next slide is the social media ad.
5 We did do a CapTel social media ad, and we
6 developed a landing page for that as well. You'll
7 see it underneath the ad where it has a banner ad
8 in several places. And so this can also -- as you
9 can see where it says, "Apply for a free amplified
10 phone now," and that's the beginning of where they
11 fill out the form, too, and it goes to AR. So
12 we're able to capture that as well.

13 The next slide are the memes that we had
14 created for us and posted on Facebook and Twitter.
15 People enjoy reading them. I enjoy reading them.
16 They're eye-catching; they're interesting. And so
17 we continue to promote the program through social
18 media.

19 The next slide shows the FTRI new
20 website. We revamped the website. It's probably
21 been, probably been over ten years since we've done
22 this. We're very pleased with it. It's easier to
23 read, pleasing to the eye. So if you have an
24 opportunity, please, please review it and go
25 through it.

1 The next slide is quality assurance.

2 FTRI maintains a quality assurance system to
3 monitor the services, training, and equipment
4 provided by our contracted agencies.

5 We have two methods of being able to do
6 the quality assurance. We have the postcard
7 questionnaires that are mailed to a random
8 selected -- selection of clients served by the RDC
9 and the FTRI office. We mailed out
10 4,683 questionnaires and we received
11 1,447 responses, for a nearly 31 percent return
12 rate. 95 percent of the responses were positive.
13 And all negative responses were either resolved by
14 contacting the client directly or referring them to
15 the regional distribution for follow-up services.

16 And the next slide is the electronic
17 version of the quality assurance. We're very
18 pleased with this system. This has been done --
19 this has been going on for probably three or four
20 years. And we sent out over 3,899. These are only
21 for individuals that give us email addresses. So
22 during the past year, 3,899 emails -- new clients
23 got an email survey the next day. The system
24 automatically releases the survey at 9:00 o'clock
25 the next morning, the following day. And out of

1 this 3,899, 1,075 people responded for a
2 27.57 percent response rate. And anybody
3 requesting follow up, we will do that for them. We
4 will contact them. We will provide additional
5 information or assistance.

6 Anybody -- as you can see -- I don't know
7 if you can see on the screen or the paper. You'll
8 see at the top where it says, "Unsubscribes."
9 These are individuals who have decided to opt out
10 of receiving or even completing the survey. So we
11 acknowledge that as well.

12 In addition to this, the first survey
13 that goes out is the -- is on the surveys of the
14 centers. And thirty days after they've had an
15 opportunity to try the equipment, we will send them
16 a second survey. The system automatically sends
17 them a follow-up survey asking them about the
18 equipment: How they like the equipment, do they
19 have any questions or need additional assistance
20 with it? And so we get those as well.

21 The next slide is the -- a map of the
22 regional distribution centers that we have
23 throughout the state. We did add one. We lost one
24 and we gained one. So RDC 33, Suncoast Center for
25 Independent Living, is located in Sarasota. You

1 may remember or recall a couple of years ago there
2 was a center there, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
3 Service of Manatee and Sarasota County. They
4 closed, they closed for other reasons, and so we
5 were working with the CIL for quite some time to
6 get them up and running.

7 We did lose Easter Seals in Orlando.
8 They just weren't providing the services to justify
9 ongoing with them, so we just decided not to renew.
10 So we have 23 at this point in time. And that
11 concludes my presentation.

12 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any questions
13 for Mr. Forstall?

14 **MR. WATA:** Yes, I have a question. This
15 is Tim Wata here.

16 And I'm wondering, regarding your new
17 improvements for FTRI's website, do you have two
18 languages on your website, meaning you include both
19 English and Spanish?

20 **MR. FORSTALL:** Yes, we do.

21 **MR. WATA:** That's very good. Very good.

22 **MR. FORSTALL:** Okay. I --

23 **MR. WATA:** I do have another question as
24 well. I understand for the FTRI, the 811 training
25 hours for advocacy services for RDCF. I'm

1 wondering what kind of training that is. Is it
2 initial training, is it a refresh training, or is
3 it a new technology training?

4 **MR. FORSTALL:** All of the above. Any
5 time we, we --

6 **MR. WATA:** Very good. Very good. That's
7 all I needed to know.

8 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any additional
9 --

10 **MR. KOTTLER:** Curtis, this is Rick
11 Kottler. I've got a comment, if I could.

12 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, please. Go ahead,
13 Mr. Kottler.

14 **MR. KOTTLER:** First of all, James, I
15 haven't been in Port St. Lucie since 2009. You've
16 got to change that chart.

17 Second of all, my, my biggest concern is
18 here we sit as an advisory group to the Public
19 Service Commission, and then once again the Public
20 Service Commission reduces the surcharge and never
21 once asks the advisory committee for any advice on
22 it. And the fact is every time that gets cut down,
23 that causes James to get a little bit thinner in
24 his budget, and the thing that it affects the most
25 is advertising. And without advertising and

1 outreach due to that advertising, our numbers go
2 down. And it's not because the population is not
3 out there, because all of the national trend
4 analysis right now has the deaf and hard of hearing
5 community expanding almost exponentially with the
6 baby boomers coming in.

7 So the fact is we're reducing resources
8 for a population that's growing, and that doesn't
9 make any good sense to me. And I think if the
10 Public Service Commission would every once in a
11 while ask us why or what we thought, maybe they
12 wouldn't do this. That's just a comment. Thank
13 you.

14 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you for your
15 comment, Mr. Kottler.

16 Are there any additional questions or
17 comments?

18 (No response.)

19 I actually -- I did have a question,
20 Mr. Forstall, or just, you know, a request to have
21 a little follow-up conversation on CapTel.

22 The -- you mentioned the CapTel 840 PLUS
23 in one of your slides. And can you provide a
24 little more background on why you, why you
25 distribute the -- or why the CapTel 840 PLUS is the

1 preferred piece of equipment? And are there any
2 other pieces of equipment that you have considered
3 similar to the 840 PLUS?

4 **MR. FORSTALL:** All right. And I think
5 you're referring to the slide on the equipment,
6 which is -- I don't have a page number. Thank you.

7 This is the distributed equipment slide
8 where the CapTel is 1.3 percent of the equipment we
9 give out. And the CapTel 840 PLUS is the only
10 CapTel that we do have in the program. And that
11 was the -- as a result of the Commission working
12 with Sprint to provide those for FTRI.

13 The individuals who are unable to hear at
14 all on an amplified phone, if they go through the
15 demonstration process and they -- we have powerful
16 amplified phones. We've got the Alto. We've got
17 the XL 3.4. They're up to 50 dB. So if an
18 individual cannot hear or discriminate sound over a
19 telephone, then they will qualify for a captioned
20 telephone. And so that's the only equipment we
21 have in our program that allows them to read text
22 on a telephone.

23 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Okay. And one follow-up.
24 You mentioned -- I'm not sure if I completely
25 understood your explanation, but you mentioned in

1 terms of the distribution of, of CapTel or the
2 actual program, that there was -- you've had some
3 concern regarding the recommendations to FTRI's
4 program for CapTel service or the referrals that
5 you received. Can you explain that a little more?

6 **MR. FORSTALL:** The -- there's a service
7 out there, the CapTel IP CTS, which is an Internet
8 Protocol captioned telephone service, and that,
9 that service is growing tremendously all across the
10 nation. And not just in Florida but other state
11 programs also have been concerned with the fact
12 that providers are out there in the field, and it
13 is very prominent in Florida because we have the
14 huge population, that -- and we've actually seen it
15 with our own eyes when we would go to the event,
16 they would be exhibiting, and we've even approached
17 them to ask them, "Could you help refer people to
18 us?" And they point blank told us no.

19 And the problem with that, in my personal
20 opinion, is you've got individuals out there that
21 can benefit from using an amplified telephone and
22 don't necessarily need to use the IP CTS.

23 First of all, it's a great product. I
24 advocate captioned telephone. I think it's a great
25 product; however, it is not for everyone. When an

1 individual, when you get -- when somebody,
2 especially in our population, when we serve someone
3 who is 70, 80, 90 years old, all they want to do is
4 pick up that telephone and make a phone call.
5 They're not interested in all these other features
6 and bells and whistles that come with it, and they
7 can be intimidated by a captioned telephone because
8 it can be intimidating.

9 And what happens is they know that if
10 they refer somebody to the FTRI program, the
11 chances are they're going to walk out with an
12 amplified phone, which is the right thing to do.
13 But they don't do it because they know that's going
14 to happen, so they keep it to themselves. And that
15 happens all across the country.

16 And there are several challenges with
17 that, and state programs have raised these concerns
18 to the FCC, is the FCC pays for those minutes. The
19 state programs don't. And so providers know that.
20 They know that if they refer to a state program,
21 the chances in Florida -- I've tracked it, I've
22 been tracking it since 2015 -- I'm sorry, '14, I
23 can show you the number, that eight out of ten
24 people that come to the FTRI program asking for a
25 captioned telephone walk out with an amplified

1 phone.

2 So that just goes to show you what's
3 going on out in the field. You can call it abuse,
4 you can call it waste, whatever you want to call
5 it. But the fact that eight out of ten people in
6 Florida can benefit from an amplified phone because
7 amplified phones have gotten better over the
8 year -- the Alto, like I said, and the XL 3.4 are
9 very powerful phones -- if eight people come in my
10 office asking for a captioned telephone and they
11 can walk out with an amplified phone, imagine
12 what's going on across the county. So that's what
13 I was referring to. They know that. They won't
14 refer to our program. And so that's another reason
15 why our numbers are going down. And so the only
16 way to actually compete with them is be able to
17 allow the 840 PLUS to work with the internet.

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Thank you. Are there any
19 additional questions?

20 **MR. KOTTLER:** Curtis, this is Rick
21 Kottler. Can I make another comment, please?

22 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, please, Rick. Go
23 ahead.

24 **MR. KOTTLER:** James, just to add on to
25 that, I mean, you're absolutely correct, but one of

1 the big things we see is it's the CaptionCall, and
2 the audiologists and hearing aid providers are
3 getting paid by CaptionCall to refer their phones
4 to them. And we have probably nine out of ten
5 people will come in telling me they want to return
6 their phone because they just got this great
7 CaptionCall and they don't need our phone anymore.
8 And we try to talk them out of it, to hold on to it
9 until they try the CaptionCall. But I will tell
10 you right now, nine times out of ten those people
11 are back at my door two weeks later wanting their
12 phone back.

13 And this is all from the audiologists and
14 the hearing aid providers convincing them that they
15 need a technology that they do not need. And it is
16 truly client abuse, and it's going on all over,
17 just like you said, James.

18 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any additional
19 questions or comments for Mr. Forstall?

20 (No response.)

21 If not, we, we are ahead of schedule,
22 unusually ahead of schedule, and we, we can go
23 ahead and -- we're normally scheduled for a break
24 at this time, but we can proceed. But if there's
25 anyone who would like to take a break, we can, we

1 can, we can take about a five-minute break. If
2 not, we can, we can proceed at this time with
3 Mr. Jeff Branch's presentation with Sprint.

4 **MR. BRANCH:** I'm ready to go ahead, if
5 you would like to, or would you like to take a
6 break?

7 **MR. WILLIAMS:** We're going to go ahead
8 and proceed, for those on the line. Everyone here
9 is prepared and ready to proceed, so at this time
10 Mr. Branch will provide a presentation on behalf of
11 Sprint.

12 **MR. BRANCH:** Well, thank you. Happy
13 Halloween. I don't know if anybody forgot, but
14 today is Halloween. I flew out here and I saw a
15 bunch of costumes at the airport. People were all
16 dressed up. I thought it was very strange to see
17 that at the airport. But, again, I'm happy to be
18 here today.

19 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Give us just one moment.

20 (Pause.)

21 For those on the line, we are -- okay,
22 we're, we're back on. We were having a slight
23 difficulty with loading Mr. Branch's presentation.
24 But we have it up now, and so we're ready to
25 proceed with his -- with Sprint's presentation.

1 **MR. BRANCH:** All righty. Well, thank
2 you. Okay. Well, my name is Jeff Branch. I'm the
3 client director of Sprint.

4 I'm going to talk about some of the same
5 things we've discussed before. We've got different
6 products. And we serve throughout the state of
7 Florida with the RCC, TRS, CapTel. We will also be
8 discussing quality reports, outreach expense
9 reports, and we'll provide you a little with an
10 update regarding the hurricanes and how they've
11 impacted us as well as Texas.

12 So if you'll go on to the next slide. On
13 this slide it shows the RCC minutes. I remember
14 last year at roughly this time of the year we were
15 very close to arriving at our 15,000 minutes, and
16 it was a reminder of -- you know, the state had
17 offered us 15,000 minutes for RCC at no cost to the
18 users or the state.

19 So this year there's been a decrease.
20 There hasn't been as much usage. At the beginning
21 of the year, you know, with March, the new fiscal
22 year all the way up we've seen a steady drop. I'm
23 not sure exactly why. There have been some unique
24 users. And what I mean by that is a person may
25 utilize this service and we would call it a unique

1 user, and that's just the way we describe them.
2 And it's possible that two or three, you know, that
3 have used it are not using it at this time, which
4 is why you'll see the fluctuation in the report.
5 And it can be hard to predict what will happen
6 because it depends on the person's usage of the
7 services.

8 If you look at it now as of September,
9 the usage is 3,765 out of 15. So we've got plenty
10 of minutes to use until March, at the end of the
11 fiscal -- well, until February, I guess it is,
12 February 28th, so the end of the fiscal year.

13 This slides shows the French usage. The
14 inbound calls are pretty consistent throughout the
15 year from March until September. The session
16 minutes are recorded there, so they are being
17 utilized. I would like you to know that people are
18 utilizing the services.

19 The next slide. This is the Florida
20 Spanish-to-English translation. It's showing the
21 outbound calls, which is the blue line below, at
22 the bottom. You also see the inbound calls, and
23 then you should see the session minutes there.
24 There is a minor decrease. Again, the Spanish
25 service is being utilized especially in the Miami

1 area, but it could be being used all over the state
2 of Florida as well.

3 The next slide. This is the usage of the
4 Relay minutes in total. You see the total session
5 minutes of service from March until September, and
6 it's interesting to see the increase. It's
7 104,633 minutes in the beginning, and then from
8 September you have 113,247 minutes. And typically
9 in the fall you have an increase in the number of
10 session minutes due to, you know, people going back
11 to school in August. There's a lot of calls made
12 during that time, so there's heavy traffic
13 occurring. It's the same in September as well.
14 You still get a lot of activity going on in the
15 fall; whereas, in the summer there tends to be less
16 usage because people are out on vacation. So you
17 will see that increase in August and September, and
18 you'll see it as well in October. But we obviously
19 don't have that data yet.

20 For CapTel you will typically see an
21 increase as well; however, this one is a little bit
22 unique. There has been a decline from 125,940 to
23 97,848 minutes in September. So there's been a
24 slight decline probably because of transition from
25 CapTel analog phones to IP CTS, and that's probably

1 what you're seeing. And this behavior is not only
2 in the state of Florida. It is occurring all over
3 the United States as well. This is a common trend
4 that's happening, and it's in line nationally along
5 with the state of Florida. It's the same with the
6 TRS minutes as well. There is a decline all across
7 the United States. It's not just within the state
8 of Florida. The gray area is what is -- those are
9 the billable minutes within the state.

10 Next slide, please. We always monitor
11 the TRS and CapTel reports. We also have
12 Costistics (phonetic). That is an organization
13 that monitors the quality of service. It's a
14 third-party vendor. So they monitor that and it
15 gives us reports that we're able to review. I'm
16 very pleased with the reports that we've been
17 receiving because we want to know what the quality
18 is, that's our number one goal, and what we monitor
19 the most to make sure we are meeting the state
20 requirements. We want to meet the customer
21 expectations as well.

22 So this here is the speed of answer. The
23 service level has been very stable, especially with
24 the hurricane, which I will be discussing here
25 soon. We've also received some complaints, and we

1 have responded as we go. There haven't been very
2 many, a small amount, and so we have followed up on
3 those depending on the issue. We've received many
4 compliments from CapTel. We get a lot of that, or
5 commendations.

6 Okay. Next slide. This is the outreach
7 expense report. We sponsor two organizations.
8 They're conferences. One was the ALDAcon 2017 that
9 happened in Orlando. I believe it was two weeks
10 ago. It was a very big conference. Many people
11 attended. There were a lot of deaf and hard of
12 hearing attendees.

13 And the other one is the FAD, the Florida
14 Association for the Deaf, conference. And that's
15 actually happening this coming weekend -- well,
16 beginning Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
17 So November 2nd to the 5th. And I will be in
18 attendance as well as FTRI. They will have a
19 representative there as well, and we will be
20 promoting Relay and their equipment and their
21 services overall. So we'll be attending. It's a
22 very special event. I think this is the 100-year
23 anniversary, so it's been in place since 1917.
24 That's when they established this organization.
25 They gathered together somewhere without any

1 technology, they came together and, you know, threw
2 ideas around and came up, you know, with the
3 different issues that they were having. And I'm
4 sure their issues in 1917 are very different from
5 the ones we are facing today, but it will be very
6 interesting.

7 They'll have a museum that will show some
8 of -- they showed some of it recently on their
9 Facebook page and their website, and they had
10 different pictures, you know, from back then. They
11 were black and white. So it's very fascinating.
12 I'm very excited and interested to see what they're
13 going to be presenting, and I'm really looking
14 forward to seeing their museum. And it's happening
15 in St. Augustine, Florida. So we're going to have
16 a booth that we're going to be sponsoring and among
17 other things as well. And we're also really
18 looking forward to the event.

19 Next slide, please. Now at this point I
20 would like to talk about the hurricane updates.
21 And as you are aware, Irma really impacted Florida.
22 I'm very happy to hear that most of the Floridians
23 were okay. And there were some challenges that we
24 faced through the hurricane, which was very
25 typical. It did impact Florida as in our Sprint

1 state -- in the Virgin Islands, and also in --
2 what's it called? -- Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico. I
3 was thinking Cuba, but that's not right. Puerto
4 Rico. So those were the two different states that
5 were impacted -- or places.

6 And we tried to focus mostly on -- in
7 reference to the state of Florida, things that
8 happened in Texas also. We had a Sprint center
9 there when Harvey and the floods came to Texas. We
10 had some really bad flood issues. We also had FEMA
11 working with people in Texas. They were
12 distributing phones and working with various
13 shelters and to establish a phone bank there where
14 people could make accessible phone calls. We also
15 had Sprint involved with wireless, a wireless group
16 there so we could also make sure that the wireless
17 and the towers were up, and there were different
18 things that were operational around the clock. So
19 similar to here in Florida. FEMA had different
20 phones which we were able to reach out to the
21 director at that time during the hurricane, and
22 they had resources and people that were out there
23 in the field making calls. Just a great list of
24 various people: Hard of hearing folks and just
25 people that would make calls and contact, do

1 outreach, Facebook and websites, and just different
2 methods of resources of advertising through the
3 news, and just getting that information out there
4 and letting people know, well, these are the needs
5 and we're going to provide internet access and
6 information and anything you may need, say, phones
7 or anything of that nature. And we also had TTYs
8 in storage that we were able to get out to
9 customers who needed them. So we did distribute
10 those phones.

11 They were prepared well in advance before
12 the hurricane arrived. We had prepared -- I don't
13 know if you know, but CapTel, the center here in
14 Tampa and Orlando, I'm not sure why we have two
15 centers in Florida, I don't know if you're aware of
16 that, but during the hurricane we had two centers,
17 so it did work well. It was a high, high
18 situation. We increased our staff during that time
19 and also in other locations because of the high
20 volume of calls. In Wisconsin and also we had some
21 -- a center in New York and other places, various
22 places.

23 Some of them -- I myself flew to another
24 center. I helped assist the staff from Orlando.
25 And the Tampa area, we actually flew to another

1 center to support the staff in that area, and also
2 in Lubbock. So the people there, the staff were
3 very pleased. So we were very happy with what they
4 did. And we had no service level impacted in the
5 state of Florida at all, which was good, and all
6 that preparation really helped.

7 I'm trying to just read my notes here or
8 read the slide to make sure I covered everything.
9 We had a 20 percent staff increase during the time
10 of the hurricanes, so that was good.

11 We always want to make sure that the
12 folks in our current center in Orlando and Tampa
13 were okay with their families as well. Not only
14 the center, but it impacted the people working at
15 the center and their families. We wanted to make
16 sure they were all okay. And they were able to go
17 ahead and go home and check on their families, and
18 we gave them that opportunity to do that.

19 Now as far as future planning, because of
20 this situation, we have decided to expand our
21 CapTel services for both analog and IP. We also
22 are expanding Dayton, Ohio, and Austin, Texas. And
23 as of today, there is training that was conducted
24 Friday, and we're going to take -- it's going to
25 happen during this week, and it will be definitely

1 recruiting more people for training and building up
2 the staff so that we can also have an increase in
3 growth and make sure that any issues, say, during
4 the hurricane, if we have another one again, we'll
5 have staff in place at both of these centers. So
6 we'll be conducting that training for that.

7 And so far this is my update. So the
8 next slide -- do you have any questions? I'm
9 through with my slides.

10 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any questions
11 for Mr. Branch? Are there any questions?

12 **MR. WATA:** I have a question. This is
13 Tim Wata. I have a quick question for you. A big
14 percentage of users are for RCC. They're
15 late-deafened adults and also oral; is that
16 correct? My understanding is those numbers are
17 going down.

18 **MR. BRANCH:** I would say actually the
19 service -- these service users are for really any
20 deaf or hard of hearing person that has a hearing
21 loss, a person who has a hearing loss or who has
22 participating -- participated in a meeting or
23 conference. They are participating in a meeting or
24 conference, so it's really open to, in general to
25 any person who has a hearing loss.

1 Typically people that work in, say, an
2 organization that may be having a meeting, so it's
3 just possible that it's -- I couldn't really answer
4 the question as far as to the decline, but we don't
5 necessarily promote this particular service, not as
6 of yet. We could promote the service and we could
7 increase to the deaf and late-deafened person so
8 that we have up to the 15,000 minutes. So we don't
9 want to necessarily get it over the 15,000 minutes,
10 so we do have to be careful and monitor that. But,
11 again, the user behavior just really depends on the
12 particular organizational conference or the
13 conference is happening that particular week or
14 month or has it been postponed. So that would be
15 the reason for that particular behavior.

16 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any additional
17 questions for --

18 **MR. WATA:** This is Tim Wata. Thank you
19 for the explanation. It was very clear. I
20 appreciate the clarification.

21 **MR. BRANCH:** You're welcome.

22 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Any additional questions
23 or comments?

24 (No response.)

25 At this time. We are -- we'll open up the

1 meeting for questions on any of the presentations that
2 have been made or any discussion, and we can entertain
3 any questions or comments at this time. Hearing --

4 **MR. WATA:** Hello.

5 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes.

6 **MR. WATA:** This is Tim Wata again.

7 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Yes, Mr. Wata.

8 **MR. WATA:** I recently studied the
9 statistics regarding Sprint. My understanding is
10 that the CapTel users are more frequent than the
11 TRS users, and I feel that the TASA Advisory
12 Committee needs to interact more with late-deafened
13 adults, oral clients, and deaf and hard of hearing.

14 The Florida Agency for the Deaf is the
15 only one being represented. I feel there should be
16 more representation than that. We have reason to
17 listen to their concern and feedback to improve and
18 have things get better for FTRI.

19 Really I want to thank Rick -- let me get
20 your last name here, Rick -- Rick Kottler recently
21 expressed his concern. I want to thank him for
22 that, and thank you for thinking about increasing
23 this for our members and getting the advice of the
24 advisory committee.

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

1 Cheryl Rhodes speaking here. And I am deaf and
2 blind, and I represent the Florida Blind
3 Association. Now the users here in Florida had
4 their ICC, able to connect their equipment first
5 through FTRI -- is that right? -- FTRI, you know,
6 the first time they did that and went ahead. It
7 was going good. And then they moved on to HANC.
8 They took over about a year ago. So we're seeing a
9 difference. It seems to be slower now. The
10 process goes much more slowly and drags out.

11 So part of the, you know, for the deaf
12 and blind here in Florida is really -- you know, I
13 want to thank FTRS (sic) for everything that
14 they've done in getting that equipment out. So we
15 just want to let you know we recognize FTRS (sic)
16 for their, you know, their good work with that.

17 **MR. FORSTALL:** This is James. Thank you,
18 Cheryl.

19 **MS. RHODES:** Uh-huh.

20 **MR. WILLIAMS:** Are there any additional
21 questions or comments at this time?

22 (No response.)

23 Hearing none, we want to thank everyone
24 for participating in today's meeting. We will have
25 the next TASA meeting tentatively scheduled for

1 April 2018. We will send out a formal notice on
2 the scheduling of that meeting during the early
3 part of next year. If anyone has -- and at that
4 time when we send out the notice, we will ask for
5 any topics that, that any of the TASA committee
6 members would like to have addressed at that
7 meeting. But prior to that, if you have any
8 questions or if you would like to make any
9 contacts, please feel free to contact me or contact
10 Jeff or contact Ms. Page, and we will start to
11 develop the agenda for that meeting and to address
12 any issues that you may have.

13 Again, I want to thank everyone, and at
14 this time we'll conclude today's meeting. Thank
15 you.

16 (Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.)

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

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

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

13 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a
14 relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of
15 the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any
16 of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with
17 the action, nor am I financially interested in the
18 action.

19 DATED THIS 3rd day of November, 2017.

20
21 
22 _____

23 LINDA BOLES, CRR, RPR
24 FPSC Official Hearings Reporter
25 (850) 413-6734