Rural Communities Initiative Mobile Technology and Distance Learning Webinar
Wednesday, February 18th, 2009

Jennifer McHenry: Hi, thanks, welcome everyone. Before we get into the presentations today, I just wanted to take a quick second and let everyone know how they can ask some questions and answers. So as you heard, at the end of our presentation today, you will be able to ask a question live over the phone to any or all of our presenters, as you see fit. But there is also another way to ask. If perhaps mid presentation you think of the question and do not want to wait until the end, look to the top of your screen. There should be a Q&A button. When you click on that button, it will bring up a dialogue box on your screen. You can type your question on there and push ask. All of those will be sent to us. We'll collect all of those that come in. You will receive a message back which says something to the effect of "your message has been sent to the moderator". This will confirm that your message was indeed sent but also provide you with the opportunity to ask another question if you want to. Or you can save them until the end and ask the operator. Now I will turn over to James Butler with the Office of Family Assistance.

Welcoming Remarks and Introduction of Speaker # 1 (James Butler, Office of Family Assistance)

James Butler: Thank you Jen and good afternoon everyone and welcome to all. We'll be having another one of our Rural Initiative Webinars today and this will cover rural technology on mobile technology and distance learning. As you all know, the Office of Family Assistance began a Rural Communities Technical Assistance Initiative back in early 2008. And we did this by asking some of our regional TANF program managers to submit nominations of agencies serving TANF participants in rural areas who can benefit from some resources, trainings, and other supports they need to come over some of the barriers and daily challenges they face in providing TANF work to their customers.

That work led to the Rural Communities Academy that occurred in 2008 in Kansas City, Missouri. Many of the participants expressed technology as one of the challenges and expressed an interest in learning more about how to utilize technology in their TANF program and in their communities. So, we are pleased to bring to you today, this Webinar, as one of a series of Webinars where we hope to be able to address and provide you with some additional resources to manage your challenges. We have some speakers for you today who will share their knowledge and resources around implementing business programs. We will later open the lines up as Jen mentioned earlier for all of you to ask questions or to see if you have comments. So our first speaker will be Ms. Mary Campanola, who is from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development, Telecommunications Program, who will be discussing some potential upcoming funding opportunities pertaining to rural technology. Mary is the Outreach Coordinator for the Telecommunications Program, reporting to the Assistant Administrator, Rural Utilities Programs.   She is responsible for outreach strategy and

coordination for all Telecom programs. She has produced 24 Rural Development broadband workshops, as well as many other outreach events. Her responsibilities also include strategic planning and performance management for the Telecom program, as well as financial reporting. She has been with the Telecom Program for five years. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome Mary Campanola.

Presentation by Mary Campanola, Outreach Coordinator for the Telecommunications Program

Mary Campanola: Thank you, thank you. I am going to see if I can get this slide to advance here. On the first slide you have my contact information. Please do not hesitate to contact me and I will tell you a little bit more about the other resources we have available to you. But go ahead and contact me if you have any questions we do not cover today or subsequent thoughts come to you or anything like that. Let me just tell you what rural development is in the department of Agriculture. We are responsible for the economic development of rural communities and I am part of an organization called Utilities Programs. We have other programs that focus on business loans and grants and housing loans and grants. Ours group focus in on the following three areas. Water and environmental programs which makes loans and grants for water systems in rural communities. The electric program which makes loans to electric and rural electric cooperatives and other electric companies. And the telecommunications program which will be our focus today we make loans and grants to communities for the construction of telecom infrastructures. And (incomprehensible) for rural communities. Under the telecommunications program we have three main areas; we have what we call our infrastructure loan program which makes loans to local telephone companies. It has been around since 1949.

We have our broadband program and community grant program which gives loans for local telephone companies and other companies who offer broadband services in urban communities and we have our discerning telemedicine loan and grant program for providing dlt services to rural residences. Today I am not going to talk about the infrastructure program but focusing on broadband and telemedicine. This slide just shows you some examples of just how rural communities are using broadband to improve their communities and the job creation and the social life in communities. I am sure you are all well aware of the benefits bringing broadband to rural America. The reason my organization exist is that in the past it has been hard to get grants into rural communities because in many cases there are higher costs to serve. It has been difficult to bring broadband to rural communities. [I am]going to talk now about the discerning telemedicine grant program and I have given you a slide here that has our Web site on it. If you want to go out there, there is an application and some other information. There are success stories of grantees who have take advantage of our program and who have bought services to rural communities. There are actual contact names out there. Names of all the grant awards that we have made. You can go out and see the type of projects we have funded.

We currently do have a grant window open now for our grant program and the deadline is March 24, 2009. As you can see there is an application guide and there are tool kits that you use to produce the application if you are interested. A little bit more on who is eligible for the grant program; just about any organization that is capable of providing discerning and telecommunications services is eligible. The only ones that are not eligible are individual forces for sole proprietary (incomprehensible). The tribes are eligible; both for profit and nonprofit organizations are eligible. Most of our grantees come from the telemedicine side from private hospitals which deal with nonprofits as well and then the school systems and colleges and universities on the discerning side. The projects are defined as projects that will use telecommunications actually for the use of services. So distance learning meaning that the educational services have to be used on a telecommunications line of some type.

Telemedicine, same thing. We are not funding a project where you would have two doctors sitting on the same floor that are just sharing information. It has to be a cross communications link going out to rural communities. I will give you some examples of these projects. A little bit on how we score this. This is a competitive grant program and the scores are based on the school of population and how dense the population is. How many of the residences in the community are eligible for the national school lunch programs (incomprehensible) can come up with. Whether it has a USDA designated economic zone. And then there are some subjective scores. The need for the project and innovative forces and so on. So all of these categories are evaluated and a list is made up of the scores and then we fund the awards to the point where we have used up all the funding for that year. We get about twice as many applications as we can fund each year. We have not gotten our appropriations for this year but we are envisioning that we will get the same as we did last year for this grant program which is about 25 million dollars. Again the application deadline for this program is March 24, 2009. Let me just stop here for a minute and let you know that if you are interested in applying we also have in every state a rural development state office that is available to help you with looking at economic development opportunities for all of our programs. And that information is available on the Web site. We also have field representatives in each state that work specifically under telecommunications programs and they can answer your questions about the dlt grant programs or anything else that I am talking about today. And if you go to our Web site and click on "contact staff" it will give you the name of the general field representative in your area or you can email me and I can help you with that.

Now some examples of what we mean by distance learning. We have been doing this since 1993 so we have quite a lot of success stories in doing this. This has been an enormous and invaluable tool for rural communities to offer services to their residences that are just not available because they do not have the educational or medical specialists that they need to provide the services. So some examples connecting schools so that they can share teaching resources, especially things like foreign languages. Advanced placement classes, math classes. And then we have some schools taking advantage of the ability to offer job training, P.E. courses, adult education, colleges and universities offering courses… local high schools among colleges and continuing education job training that is a very important tool for rural communities. Some telemedicine projects

examples: remote diagnostics such as the truck shown here for eastern Kentucky Health Services. This allows the service and medical providers to go around and provide services to even the smallest communities. And remote radiology is very popular. Nurse services are very very popular and we have done a lot of those projects. The goal here is to provide resources in an urban or suburban area. If you go out to our Web site there are summaries out there on these types of projects and you can see the type of thing that we have done and maybe give you some ideas of how maybe your community can participate. And then the final program that I am going to talk about today in detail is the community connect grant program. This program started in 2003 and it is a competitive grant program as is the dlt grant program meaning that there is scoring that we go through on the grant applications and we rank the applications that we receive and then we fund them up to the extent that we can. This grant program is for communities that want to bring broadband to their residents and it has for their communities only with a population of 20,000 or less. There is a matching contribution that is required.

There is a notice of funding availability that is coming soon for this year we have not published that yet. It usually gets you about 60 to 90 days to get your application in to this program. And last year we had 15 million dollars available for this program. Again we get about twice to three times as many applications as we can fund. This program was provided for the mediates of the communities to bring broadband to the community. Now I should point out the difference between this and the dlt program. The dlt grant program funds the equipment that you need to provide telemedicine and distance learning services such as video conference services, software programs and so forth. Where as the broadband grant program actually fund the services themselves. So what is required for the grantee to do is to develop or create a community center which can just be a room in the library it does not have to be a separate building or anything. But there has to be a public community center with ten computers available free of charge to the residents of the town. Also, free service must be provided to the critical facilities for two years. That includes the fire station, city hall, and so on. And then the grantee must show how they are going to grow out from the inner part of town out to offer basic broadband service to residential and business customers within that proposed service area. Very popular program.

The community center has proven invaluable in terms of making rural residents aware of the advantages of broadband. Who is eligible? Just about anybody who that takes partnership or that is an individual. The scoring involved again is in the ruruality of the community, the economic of the community… in this case it has measured by the household income of the community compared to the state average. And the benefits derived from the proposed projects. These projects do not require a professional grant writer to fill out this application. We are really looking for what does your community need and how is this funding going to benefit that community. Some success stories, again, this program was provided for the neediest most rural programs out there that would not get broadband any other way so I have given you a couple of examples of how important this program has been to communities. We have a wonderful example in (incomprehensible) from Mexico, Navajo reservation, they got a community grant from us and created a computer center and then they went to our sister agency and got funding

to create an electronic commerce center and now they are selling their Navajo arts and crafts on eBay. All through these two grants that they got through working with the New Mexico rural development state office and our field representative. And I will give you a couple other examples of how the grantee has involved the local community to start forming customer service using high school students to do customer service for the project and this type of thing. It has been very popular and has been very successful. And I am now giving you some information on if you are interested in applying, how you can find out more and also the link there for the general field representative so that you can get information if you need to. Now let me just say for one minute a little bit about the stimulus bill. I am sure you have all heard about the stimulus bill that was signed into law yesterday. We have got some additional funding from that stimulus program and stimulus bill. So we will be announcing, as soon as we have our plans finalized, we will be announcing the requirements for that program. That is going to be an additional 2.5 billion dollars between now and 2010 for us to award grants and loans for broadband and medical. So the program that we will develop for that funding does not necessarily have to have the same requirements as the programs I just went over with you. So more to come on that. We are not sure yet on how quickly we can get that done but the whole point of the program is to get them in place quickly so we will be moving as fast we can when developing that program and information on those grants as well as potential combination loan grants. So I think that concludes my presentation. And I will wait for questions later.

Introduction of Speaker # 2 (Sheryl Rehberg)

James Butler: Thank you so much Mary. We are going to go on and move on to our next speaker who will be Sheryl Rehberg, Executive Director North Florida Workforce Development Board, who will be speaking on mobile career services being provided throughout rural North Florida. Ms. Rehberg has worked in rural North Florida for two and a half years, leading the workforce services of six counties that reach from the southern border of Georgia to the gulf coast, between the state capitol of Tallahassee and Jacksonville on the east coast. During that period of time, the Board has transitioned from three "bricks-and-mortar" one-stop career centers to one regional one-stop, which is geographically located in the center of the six-county area. As a part of a tiered service delivery plan, mobile services were implemented in the summer of 2007 with the first vehicle. A year later, a second unit was deployed to enhance services to the Welfare Transition customers. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome Sheryl.

Presentation by Sheryl Rehberg, Executive Director North Florida Workforce Development Board

Sheryl Rehberg: Thank you. Good afternoon and greetings from Florida. I wanted to talk with you a little bit today about how we came from actually originally six career centers in our region to more general and two mobile centers on the road. The trip has been eventful and the changes have been challenging but we feel like we are effective in delivering those services to our region. I have been with the force for about two and a half years and part of the challenge has happened before me. Next slide… Thank you.

Some of the things we have had to consider are how that board would come to that decision. We had to consider all of the program needs. We were faced with the need for a second vehicle. We had to do a lot of work on staffing and scheduling. And we considered greatly the public relations need for this service so those are the things we are going to be talking about. Next slide.

As you can see from this map, we have six different counties that star represents the location of our one center. We are located about 60 miles west of Tallahassee which is the state capital and 125 miles east of Jacksonville over on the east coast. Our area is not densely populated. There are about 117,000 people in our region. That population has increased since and we are anxiously awaiting a new census count. They are spread out over miles and miles. It has about a 30 mile drive between counties to another. So you can imagine the transportation challenges our customers face. And three of our counties are rather small. The others are just small. Our December unemployment rate regionally is 7.7… One of our counties has a 10.9 percent rate and another one has a 9.1 percent rate so it has quite high in this rural area. The average annual wage in our region in 2007 was $29,800. Since July of last year we have had about a little over 14,000 visits to our centers. We have had 678 applicants referred from our Department of Families and who has come to orientation to the welfare program and we opened 267 new cases in that period of time. We have three welfare full time career consultants and a case load of about 262. So prior to 2004/2005 we had offices in all six counties. As you can imagine expenses of leases and utilities and technology infrastructure and staffing and all of those things. And when funding allocations started getting low the board closed three of those smaller county offices. And when (incomprehensible) made the spots into three larger counties.

Then by 2007 it was no longer financially feasible to keep three full offices open. So after about four months of discussion and study and board meetings and committee meetings we can to a decision to implement a peer service strategy. And briefly that service strategy is our traditional face to face service when customers come into that regional center and deal with them in the normal fashion. And then we have an already implemented self service where we have kiosk operations in three libraries in our region. And our third level is mobile services where we are taking that office on wheels out to where customers are. And our fourth level is global services where we used the Web based marketplace where job seekers and employers meet. So that is our peer service strategy. That decision by our board was quite painful. We did have some opposition to the idea. Particularly because in some of these rural communities a lot of the public services had already left those communities so people were already having to travel quite long distances for public services like applying for public assistance and food stamps and those types of things. In a lot of cases we were their only connection. The agency's new way of doing business took a lot of adjustment for our board members, our staff and for the general public. But now we have been embraced by all of those communities and they are very happy to see us come with those services that they thought were gone forever. I can not stress enough the importance of partnership in developing his mobile service plan. There is no way this would every work without the cooperation and the coordination with those people in the community. And part of that resistance in the

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beginning is due to the vehicle itself. It has hard for people to understand that at first glance how we could afford these mobile units when we could not afford the office to keep the offices open. But people began to understand that when you have non-reoccurring funds, if you do not use them, you do not get to use them. So what we did with the original purchase of our unit was put together some regular funding allocations with some non-reoccurring funds. And we actually spent a little over $300,000 on that first unit. And that excluded a few things like the graphics done locally which saves us quite a bit of money. Once the decision was made to go mobile we secured the use of the state agency's mobile lab to help us out a couple of days out the week so we did not have too much of a break in those outlying counties. But it did not take us but one week to realize that two days in those counties was not enough to provide an acceptable level of service. So we have progressed from two days a week at the state agency's lab to four days a week with two vehicles on the road in a pretty short period of time. Next slide please… Thank you. So since we only have one career center in the region and many of our customers do not have transportation which I am sure many of you are familiar with we have had to go mobile to make the welfare transition program work.

This office on wheels is equipped pretty much for every service a motor office is equipped for. But instead of connecting customers to use we are connecting the service to the customer out there were they live. Overcoming that transportation barrier in our area is such a big issue in the rural community. But our mobility has helped us increase our welfare. I do believe I am going to owe that unit lunch soon because I think it has going to pass 50% participation rate in the very near future. I feel proud of our staff for that. Part of our board's mission is self sufficiency and enhancement in economic development in our region and we believe our mobile (incomprehensible) and all of our job seekers and customers is very critical to that mission. We have seen a 40% increase in all of the foot traffic on our Web site and a 33% increase in welfare transition participants in the program. Now our library system is a lead service in our service strategy at two levels. That of the kiosk operations which is the self service. Our kiosks are placed in those libraries in those small counties. But then they also provide Internet service; a computer lab for people to use in those communities and they have seen a dramatic increase in the number of people coming in looking for jobs and using their computers… The systems were able to connect our services to with our mobile services is still often the only access they have.

We have seen good response from our welfare transition customers. We have made their career consultants available to them in their own communities. So making these labs available to those transition customers provides access to work activity for them to fulfill their work requirements. In the way of job searching, working on their resume, doing work readiness activities online and such as that. We also have very good working relationships with our department of children and families as they refer their welfare transition customers to us. We keep those lines of communication open so we feel like that is one of our strengths in this rural community. In serving those welfare transition customers and we do outstation a staff member in one of their offices two and three days a week. So we are really not swinging at this ball from one angle. We had one customer that lives in the smallest town in our region who because we made this available to her in

her community since she did not have transportation she was able to with the assistance of her career consultant she located a job. She is now employed and moving very quickly to self sufficiency. And then another one recently worked with her consultant in her community without coming to our regional office and he helped her to arrange an interview with an employer who met her at the mobile lab. And she was subsequently hired by that employer. We also station some of our WIA hires on these units. Our veteran services career consultants will go out to these units and they will help people the unit and I will explain the difference between the two to you in just a minute. But they do things not only to assist the mobile services staff, but to recruit customers to their program. Next slide…

So after having our first unit on the road for a year and based on those foot traffic reports and all of those things, the board determined that is was a valuable option. In the two larger counties our first unit took a 38 foot unit with work stations would consistently see over 100 people a day. Sometimes as many as 120 people. When they would go to the smaller communities they would see between 10 and 20. So we were trying to take all of the universal job seeker customers and the welfare transition customers in one unit and it was quickly getting stretched beyond capacity for staff and space. So by adding a separate unit by adding welfare program funds we were able to dedicate the smaller work unit which has five work stations to the welfare transition program. Then we could expand the schedule of the larger unit to twice a week in a more populated county and the band for services just increased as the unemployment rate continued to rise for all of these services for welfare transition and the job seekers and those applying for unemployment for compensation. We can still mobilize our welfare transition staff to a larger unit, and we do that, but we always have welfare transition staff on the smaller unit. So that actually relieved some of the congestion on the original larger unit that we have on the road. And he second unit allowed us to focus more on welfare transition services and to be in those smaller counties for more days, those were the places where people had more transportation issues. As in increasing the number of units we had on the road, the number of offices naturally increased our foot traffic. The initial cost of the second unit was a little over $200,000 dollars and that did not include the graphics. Next slide…

In the beginning, talking about our staffing, in the beginning we started with only one mobile unit staff member. And then we would rotate other staff to assist on the days that the unit was out on the road. We saw very quickly that another person was critical to operations so we added another mobile unit staff member and then the unemployment rate kept going up, the demand for services kept going up and we saw the need for an additional mobile unit staff person. When we added the small unit to the large one, we naturally needed more people. So at his time we had three full time dedicated staff members to mobile services. And getting that smaller unit allowed us to split the staff in three, and then add a career consultant full time to the smaller unit. And what a career consultant does is schedule an appointment according to the days in which they will be available to be in those communities. So it takes a scheduling finesse of our career consultants to make sure the connections are made at the right time and the right place. For safety of staff we do require that there be two people on board at all times. The three

unit staff members all love to drive and serve customers. Our administrative assistant stays on top of the scheduling. She has a master plan that she uses, and then she steps in at the last minute. She sort of keeps somebody on call in case one of the mobile unit staff members calls in sick. She makes the adjustments for staff to have vacation or scheduled time off of any kind. We do have a really good team working in our mobile services.

And we have cross trained people to handle just about any job in our office upon notice. We have WIA and youth program staff assist at scheduled times in order to recruit program participants from the customers who visit these mobile labs out in the community. Just like they do in the resource room in our regional office. And as I said our veteran service staff will also do the same. This schedule does require some travel for staff in the region and it might have been a little bit of a adjustment for some of them to begin with because they were used to going to their desk and staying there all day but staff has really come to enjoy getting out in the community and making connections in the communities where their customers live. Nobody complains about the travel anymore and it has become something they look forward to. Our employer services continue the use of our mobile labs in some of their down time for social requests of employers for things like job fairs and hiring events, layoff assistance and those kinds of things. And then another role of our employer services team is that of marketing our welfare transition program work experience program. And I put this in just because talking about serving those welfare transitions customers in these rural areas but our employer services team is important to that work because they introduce that work experience program as a benefit or service of our board. And then the welfare transition director follows up with more detailed information and contracts so that we have places for customers to gain the work experience they need to fulfill their work requirements. And we have seen a good increase in the number of work sites that we have available to our customers. And naturally that affects our participation rate. Next slide…

On scheduling, the most important thing we have found in is scheduling is to have a master schedule and be as consistent as you possibly can. When there are emergencies you just have to make adjustments. But for instance we will have our large unit, it goes to the same place on Monday and Tuesday, and on the same place on Wednesday and Thursday every week following a break down. So the people in those communities know when that service is going to be there and they have come to depend on it and so has our employers. Everybody in the community has come to depend on that. Our smaller unit also has a master schedule. It will be in the same place the second and fourth Monday of every month. Then it will be in the same place the first and third Thursday of every month and so on. You get the idea. Consistency is the important thing in scheduling these vehicles and where they go. Partner relationships are so important there. When we first started to talk about creating mobile services I began to make calls and visits to partners to develop sites to sit these vehicles up. Our vehicles are not equipped with restrooms so we have the assure convenient facilities are available for our staff. And then the other issue as far as location is having a place where our staff can go and get lunch when they have a lunch break. We do have microwaves and refrigerators of course. And so some of them will take their lunches but having a place for them to take a break from their work is important. We do ask them on the large unit where they have three staff members on

board at all times. We do ask them to rotate their lunch breaks so that two people are there while one takes a lunch break. And the smaller the unit we allow them to close the door for a brief time during the lunch hour so that they can get lunch.

So what do we do if one of them breaks down? What we do, as we did just recently, a couple of weeks ago one of our units broke down on the way to its location in the morning. So we prioritized the service area. And we tried to divert the service unit, now that we have a second one; we are able to divert it to where the most people are and were the most customers are going to be waiting for our service. We call customers who have appointments for that day and we call the location host because one of the places we use for instance is a K Mart parking lot. And so if our vehicle is not there when it has scheduled to be, customers will go into the store and say, "Where's the bus?" And so it has important that we keep that communication open with our location host. And then for an extended repair time like what happened to us recently, we did call on the state agency and they sent their mobile lab down to help us out so we did not have too much in a break in services. We do purposely reserve some downtime, because of the maintenance needed for cleaning and restocking supplies and forms and updating computer applications and those types of things. These are also the days our mobile services staff can use to catch up in the office on paperwork and attend staff trainings and meetings and we try to schedule employers special requests so called "down days" of our mobile units. Next slide…

As we must decide then to see if it is a real possibility we contacted our peers and other workforce board members whom we knew had mobile units. And they gladly shared their operations plans with us and we pretty much duplicated plans that others shared with us and just adapted into the needs of our region. There were lots of forms to develop when keeping mileage, generator time, maintence, computer application updates and all of those things. But we do continue to learn that there is always something to be improved. It has also really important in developing an operations plan and keeping it updated is that all staff needs to be trained in the use of the unit purchase form. Our vendor provided a video of the onsite training he did and we used that ongoing training as reminder training sometimes.

And we think it has very important that the mobile unit has staff to read the operations manual that cover everything on the vehicle. IT staff just has to be involved with the project from start to finish and then ongoing. We had occasions where our IT team director had to troubleshoot satellites and things like that. We do live in work in remote areas, but we really had very little issue with making the connection via satellite. As long as were able to work in an open space it has not been a big problem for us. He keeps our computers maintained and updated. He keeps all the systems on the computers that we have accessed regional and one stop centered. And one thing we had been able to do is add laptops to expand the number of computers available to customers and staff. And in some places we use air cards just to have another connection. With 13 computers going at one time the bandwidth with the satellite service can get (incomprehensible) and slow things down. We use cell phones for communication. We have network printers on the mobile lab but we have not yet provided that service. For application, most of our fax services need an application to go to employers when people have applied for jobs. But

we had our mobile services staff bring anything that needs to be faxed and bring it to the regional office at the end of the day. And it is faxed that afternoon or first thing the next morning. And fortunately most of our employers are moving to Web based applications so that reduces a need for faxing things back and forth. Again, partnerships are very critical to development and implementation of a mobile services plan. We are very fortunate to have good relationships with our county and city government in our region and right here where our offices are located the county board of commissioners graciously allowed us at no charge to secure our vehicle behind their locked gate (incomprehensible). We had no sense of any pranks or tampering with our mobile units while they are parked. Slide number 9…

We had to do very little time for our lab. And that is because with the graphics we have on them, they are a rolling advertisement. They are very difficult to miss. If one passes you on the road, you see it. And actually we are very much more visible now in the small community than we were before we put these mobile labs on the road. Many times our small offices in those communities were tucked into another building where they just were not visible. But we do have that visibility now with these vehicles. We also make use of our regional newspapers. We do radio public service announcements at times. And we have done printing of materials to hand out to businesses and customers. We have tried to keep our schedule simple so that we can be with the information we print out. Just a word about our graphics. We do have a local vendor who applied our graphics so we were able to design them ourselves right here at home. And if there are any problems with them they can come right here and address those problems. And also say that a significant amount of money on the purchase originally.

As I said our brochures have been developed that can be used for promotion. We do include this information because it is such an important service in any presentation that we make to community groups and organizations. We provide our customers with a small card with a number they can call and verify the schedule of the mobile units on any given day. We have used our mobile unit in local festivals, festivities, and communities. We have not done as much of that the last year as we did in the first year. We did have the chance back in October to participate in the first mobile services unit here in Florida hosted by one of our workforce boards downstate. That was a very good experience where there were a lot of good ideas shared and generated by regional workforce board and service from Florida and across the country. One last idea that we have floated but have not acted upon yet is that of offering ad space to partners in the region. Businesses, colleges, and other organizations as a way to generate revenue with out mobile unit. There are some regional workforce units that are willing to do that with their mobile vehicles. And there are just various (incomprehensible) that we could provide for them. But that's an idea that we have not acted on yet. Last slide…

So here is my contact information. I would be more than glad to talk with anybody who has questions about how we work these mobile services and how it has working for us in our welfare transition program. Again, thank you for allowing me to talk with you this afternoon. And I will join Mary at question time and take some time for that. Thank you Mr. Butler.

Introduction of Speaker # 3 (Stan Brodka)

James Butler: Sure. Thank you very much Sheryl. We are going to go ahead and move along to our next presenter. Our second speaker is Mr. Stan Brodka, Director of Sales, KeyTrain, who will be speaking on KeyTrain, a comprehensive easy-to-use system for improving basic skills measured by the Work keys Employment System. Mr. Brodka manages the implementation and sales of KeyTrain nationwide. He recently coordinated the statewide rollout of KeyTrain in Alabama. Before joining KeyTrain, Mr. Brodka sold enterprise resource planning software to manufacturing and distribution companies. Early in his career he worked for IBM in their mid-range systems department. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome Stan.

Presentation by Stan Brodka, Director of Sales, KeyTrain

Stan Brodka: Hey well thanks. Thank you. I appreciate that. And what I am going to do here is, let me see if I can not, just gain control of this. And once again my name is Stan Brodka from KeyTrain. And just real quickly our number here is 877-842-6205. So I will be hanging around as well but if you have any question in the future please give me a call. And let me see here. I think I took control here so I apologize. Oops I am sorry. Okay, sorry about that. If you can advance the next slide. I thought I had control.

Thank you. Just want to give you a very quick background. What we have done is that we have got online curriculum and there are a couple of different ways you can implement this and I will go into that as well. But I just want to give you the quick overview of what we are all about. There are a couple of things. One of which is we know employers need skilled people. Or skilled labor. And what this really comes down to is there is ACT. ACT is a nonprofit organization. And they put out something called the Work Keys test. And the work keys test is a really neat test in the sense that work keys went out into the communities, out into the workforce, and analyzed specific jobs and found out what type of specific jobs are necessary and at what level do you need to be at those skills to perform those jobs. What this does is create a common language between employers and potential employees. They can see exactly what type of skills are necessary. And either foundational skills. So these are the skills; so for an example if you are an electrician, or if you are going to work on auto bodies, medical assistant, dental assistant, whatever that is, you have had to have had some foundational skills to be successful at that job. And what we are saying too is that students sometime know a bit of math, but they do not know how to apply it. For example, so they will know maybe some adding or subtracting or if they are not at that level we can certainly help with that too; but a lot of students will have some basic skills but it has applying that into a real world situation and having the critical thinking skills. And that's what we really focus in on. Next slide please…

Okay, these are the areas. There is reading information, applied math, locating information, I have got those three; there is an asterisk next to those three because those are really the core of the program. So these are all the areas that are assessed by this work key test. And these are in essence all of the areas in which we supply curriculum for. And

we have been very successful helping people obtain those foundational skills. So there are some additional areas such as applied technology, some softer skills such as teamwork, observation, listening, writing, business writing… All very important as well. But what we found is that certainly that the reading information applied math and locating information, you are going to need that for just about all the jobs that are out there. And next slide…

Okay, and this is just an example of what a national career certificate looks like. And here again this is based on that work key assessment, based on the applied math, locating , and reading for information. So when you use this, the students can get a certificate showing their (incomprehensible) showing their ability level in these areas. Next slide…

This will just give you an idea of the activity with the national career certificate and the career end certificate. Same thing, so do not worry about that. In essence, the difference is, I guess I should not say It has exactly the same thing, but the difference is one is signed by the governor and one is issued directly from ACT. So in essence they measure the same skills. But the thing that I wanted to highlight here just a bit is that we are working in Alaska, in Alabama, and we are doing a lot of things with distance learning there. In addition, Sheryl mentioned earlier that the mobile lab and TB in South Carolina, they've got mobile labs in which they will administer key labs as well. In Oregon for example we are working with getting paraprofessionals trained, and we have got a very nice passing rate on that professional program which is at basically the teacher's assistance program. Some of the individuals are doing dial up there. So we have done some things where we are very familiar with that rural environment as in delivering curriculum and providing the basic skills so they can go on and achieve employment. Next slide…

Okay, just a couple things in references. Why we feel this is a good fit or why we feel this is a success with distance learning. There is a couple of behind the scenes things as far as technology standpoint. Where we simply reduce the bandwidth of the software itself. So this is web delivered. So there are two ways or there are a couple of different or a number of ways you can actually implement this or roll this out. One of which is that you know in that PD I should mention PD, South Carolina and some other areas too they are using a key train mobile lab. And that is kind of going back to Sheryl's point again there where you can administer this actually through the mobile van or mobile bus. In addition to this, in addition to that, it is Internet based. So because as a result of it being internet based anywhere that someone has Internet access they can access the program. And it has designed so that you as an instructor or administrator of the program, you really got some flexibility in the sense of the amount of oversight that you want to really engage with your clients.

So if you want to get your clients set up onto the system, you can go ahead and do so. And then they key train themselves, and then you run some reports, and then you can determine or just monitor their progress as they go along. As far as a distance learning perspective you can either have a you know you can have a follow up meeting, an in person follow up meeting, as an instructor or an administrator. Maybe just a quick

conference call with that individual, of course correspond by email, I mean, theoretically, you could just let that individual get on the key train and go. Certainly the more interaction, and I know that you probably know that better than I do, but the more interaction that you can give with that follow up, the better. So we do have those reports that you can see as an instructor. Administrators can log on through the internet to see how well they are doing on their progress in the system as well. The structure design itself, there is just a real human voice that speaks to the person as you go through this. So if you can not be there in person, as an instructor, one of the goals certainly with the distance learning is that if someone can speak to this individual as they go through that we have found that to be really helpful. And really it is easy to use. It has set up like a Web site because it has a Web based system and there is an easy navigation. And just real quickly we are here to support your efforts. So if you have a question or even if your clients have a question too we take calls from everybody. So if they have any type of problems they can call us and we have got somebody that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and the number is toll free… During the day if you call, and I like working, some aspects I like about the company too is that you get a live person. That you do not have to worry about fighting voicemail. And I am going to see real quickly if I can not just pull this up real quick. Taking a change of pace here. Okay; okay.

All right, so a couple of things. One of which is that I mentioned this is a web based curriculum. And there are really two perspectives to this. One of this is what you will see as an administrator an instructor of the system. And then again you can run some reports so you can monitor your client's progress as they are moving through this. We have seen when people incorporate this in the system learning perspective. Once again as that mobile lab unit or as a conference call email so check in and give or do whatever type of if you want to push people along as well to give them that motivation to continue. Or you can get them you can get them in it, and you can really just let them get going. So I am just going to log in real quick as a student. And I am going to log in as student Tom Jones. And this is set up like a Web site. And I think this is going to take a little bit longer because I am using this over this over our service here the live meeting service. And if this does not work I have got a backup plan. So I can go back to the PowerPoint.

But I am hoping I can show you this as well. Okay. We may be really testing the limits of bandwidth with live meeting. In an essence, what I have done or what alot of our customers will do here is that they will put their clients on the key train. And what you can do is that you can give a pretest so there are many different levels throughout the curriculum. And then based on how well they do on that pretest you automatically plug them into a level that's appropriate for them. You do not really have to guess to see at what level you are going to plug somebody into the curriculum itself. And, let us see here. Okay. Okay. Well, good, I do not know why it was pausing there but I am going to jump now into my assignment. And what I have done here is I have assigned just these three core areas; reading for information, applied math, locating information. Locating information is a really good one. Because this is understanding that gauges graphs meters; this is the type of stuff that you do when you are on a job but it has not often taught in high school. And I am going to jump into applied math here. Okay. Okay and let me log out here. Because of the live meeting that we are using service here, I am not

able to and I apologize, I am not able to run this. Which is unfortunate. But let me try one more thing here. Okay. Well sorry about that. Let me log out of this real quickly. What I will do and uh okay. What I was hoping to show you is that you have got a pretest that you can give the students. I am going to jump back to the PowerPoint. Okay and sorry about that. Um I think that was just a limitation of the live meeting there that wasn't able to show that over the system. If I could go to the next slide…

Okay. A couple of quick things. One of which is that you can give that pretest to that student and when they take that pretest based on that they are plugged into curriculum that corresponds with their level. I do not know if you can see the slide so quickly. But you as an administrator, you have got the option on what curriculum you want to choose to get to the student. So there are a lot of job profiles that have been profiled within the system. And it has a little bit hard to see the screenshot so hopefully you can tell that I am tapping into the job profile database that's supplied by ACT. And next slide please…

And what I can do is I can assign curriculum based on that. This will give you a little bit of the feel for the curriculum itself. This is locating information. This is what I was speaking to you about a little bit earlier. And with this we have got you know understanding bar graphs; if you are a medical assistant or if you are an electrician if you are going to be getting involved into landscaping or a carpenter you are going to be looking at some type of charged diagram and different plans as well. And next slide…

Okay this is what the navigational screen looks like. This really is pretty easy to use. You can set up different instructor accounts, add students to the system, and next slide…

Okay I am going to go over just a couple of quick results here as well. And the next slide please…

We are in the Chicago public school system. We truly like this because it gives a lot of credibility to it closes the number of students that are enrolled and we have seen some in five or six hours system we have seen people move up one level within the work keys system itself. Next slide…

In the Tidewater Community College they have got a great program there where they are using key train to help with help students pan a GED. And some first attempt success rates on the GED now at about 89 to 94 percent. And that is after the students can go up through key train in applied math level five and then reading for information level five and if they can get through that and complete those levels successfully we have seen the first attempt passing rates on a new GED in the neighborhood of that 89 to 94 percent. Previously at the Tidewater Community College it was at the low 20 percent range. So we are real proud of that. And next slide…

New Mexico Community College. Just wanted to stress that we have seen some improvements in placement scores, so we have seen improvements in GED placement scores as well as the work keys assessment. And the next slide…

Okay, a lot of improvement in the Georgia High School placement test. Here again students just wanted to show some of the credibility of the strength of the program. So in which the passing rates have fell for the at risk population. And just the next slide please…

And the next one…

This is really kind of the strength of the system too. And once again I apologize for not being able to show this to you with the flash player not working with the live meeting. But what you can do is this. And let me just try this real quick. And let's see if I can not log in. Okay, so this, I am able to log in and I do not think I am actually going to be able to run a lesion but this is what you see as an administrator or instructor of the system. And what I am going to do here is I am going to add a student real quickly because I know that this is what you would do with your potential client. And if I add this student, let us say I add maybe Tony Jones here and I am going to add a username and password. Okay, final lesson. Now, what I can do is assign lessons to different (incomprehensible) reading information, I can just got ahead and assign that lesson and that will give you (incomprehensible) pretest, which your client, especially if the remote area is going to be really hard to get a feel as to where they are at.

As far as their educational level, so giving that pretest plugs them into the level that's appropriate for them. And then I can also go and select a profile. So what I can do here for example is that, and this really ties everything together, and this is the way you would go about assigning curriculum. As an example if I put in medical, I can see here that I have got (incomprehensible), I have got medical laboratory technologists, medical assistants, medical repatriates, so if I click on medical assistants, and these are job profiles that have been done by the ACT job profilers. And I get an (incomprehensible) code here. In addition I get a description and I also get some of the tasks that are involved. So what this says is a couple of things. One of which it should answers those questions if you are dealing with clients, you know, why do we need to have these (incomprehensible) skills?

Well you need to have foundational skills because this is the type of stuff that you are going to do on the job and this has been determined by what's been called an ACT job profiler, and they actually gone out into the workforce, this is not based on theory, this is based on actually sitting down with and meeting with medical assistants in this case, and determining what type of foundational, what type of math skills, what level do they need to be. As you can see here they need to be at a level four or higher to do this job. Locating information they need to be at a level 5 or higher. Which really makes sense because as a medical assistant you are going to take a look at charts and gauges and graphs and looking at different meters. You are going to have to interpret those properly. And then the final step with this which I think is really neat is that you can tie all of this together so we have got the different skill levels and skill areas. We know what level you need to be, where and at how high that level or how how high in that skill you need to be. And then what you need to do with the final step is assign curriculum based on that job profile. So here again I am going to give you that pretest to that student, and I am going

to check here to add to those who are in an additional practice, click assign, and click okay. And now what I have done there once again is that from the instructor or administrator, I have now assigned curriculum based on specific job profile. Okay. And let me pull this up as well. Okay. Go back to this here. Main screen. And then as an administrator or instructor of the system, let me share this. Actually if you'd go to the next slide…

This is just highlighting just a different job profile. I have just put in electrician there. You see the different types of electrician. And then to the next slide please…

Here again you can see that (incomprehensible) code. And see that the skill levels that are needed to perform that job. Also the skill area. And once again we can assign curriculum based on a specific job profile. Next slide…

And this is what I wanted to show you. I apologize for this not being compatible with live meeting. But we really have had a lot of success in the delivery of this over the internet and in some of those vans as well. And this is what the curriculum actually looks like. And it has a little bit better if I can do this live but here are at least a couple of screen shots. What we have got is applied math. Now what we have got in applied math is different topic areas, and if you'd go to the next slide… and what I have done here is this is what the curriculum looks like itself. Now this is the neat thing about this. In the sense that we have got applied math and now I am in handling money. This is level three. And there are the different levels. ACT, Work Keys system is based on these different levels, in math it goes through 1 through seven, so this will give you a little bit of a feel for what level three is. And here again this corresponds with knowledge and corresponds back to those job profiles that I just showed so this is the type of skills that you'd need to be at a level three. For an electrician for example, I think you needed to be or for a medical assistant for example, you need to be at a level four. So here again it has all relevance skills tying back to specific jobs. What I like about this curriculum is this. Is that here we have got a word problem rather than just saying you know here's word problem figure it out this system on a step by step basis. So the exercise in this situation is to use the mouse and just click on what you need to find. So the goal here certainly with distance learning is that if you can not be with that person, then the next best thing is that if we can have that real voice that speaks to them and really breaking things down on such a small step by step basis. Next slide please…

And what I have done there you will see that feedback there and it will say sorry that is not correct. Look for the words that tell you what you need to find. So here again if somebody if you can not be with in a classroom for the situation, if you can be, that is great, but if you can not be, what you are going to do here is that I got this problem incorrect. I clicked on the wrong area. And what I got was that feedback right away so it has going to guide me and give me some answers during these practice problems rather than just saying, "Hey you got this wrong". What we are going to do is give some feedback at this point, some guidance, and we see that can be really helpful in distance learning well in the red there, that popped up right below the exercise. You know, sorry, this is not correct, the words tell you hat you need to find. And next slide please… Now

when I get that correct it changes and highlights what I am looking for. I need to find and see how much I spent on office supplies. And what we find here too is that this is a word problem. Now It has not really (incomprehensible). So here again, we are going to break it down step by step in an incremental basis and we want to show people so they can obtain that critical thinking and skill. And you apply that same type of logic to other problems too. You know, first, what are you looking for. Looking at the facts and going through these things just on an incremental basis. Next slide…

Okay, so the next step here is I know what I am looking for, how much money did, you send, you know, let's translate that into an actual math calculation. So here again we are going to take things just on a step by step basis. In guiding that student on how to tackle word problems. And what I am looking for when I am thinking about how much, I am really thinking about, you know, addition. And the next slide… Okay, okay. And the next step with that is you know when I am looking at addition, ah, well, you know when I am solving these problems; I know what I am looking for. The operations, I know what operation, that's addition, and now I am going to click on the facts and now I am ready to solve the problem. So what we are doing once again is just wanted to give you a little feel for the delivery method of how we are just going through this on an incremental basis. Okay, the next slide…

Okay, and this is just a course analysis (incomprehensible). This is what you would use as an administrator or as an instructor of the system. And here again this will enable you to track how everybody's doing. As a screen shot, it has not as clear as I'd like it to be. But on the left hand column there those are names. There is Nat Cole, the next name is Greg Barton, the columns there, you know the pretense level 1 level 2 level 3, we can see there is some data in the column level 3 and the column level 4, so we can see how well the students are doing. Excuse me, your clients are doing, as they progress through this, so we can keep tabs on them as you can see, okay, how are they doing on the different level of quizzes. In addition to that the far right hand column, it has a lot more clear when you look at it on the PDF form as opposed to the screen shot. But you can see for example that Greg Barton has been in applied math, he has been in there for 13 hours, 13 minutes, and 38 seconds. So you can see okay this person either needs to put more time into this or if they are telling you they've put time into this you can actually see how long they've been in there. They get logged out after 15 minutes. So you can not log in and you know, maybe go out to eat or whatever and just have that accumulate time. I just wanted to show that from that instructor administrator point of view so you can really keep tabs and monitor the progress of people; even if it has just they are remote as well. It has just a distance learning environment. And the next slide…

Okay, uh, I think that might be it actually. Okay, once again, my name is Stan Brodka from Key Train and I apologize for not being able to show the curriculum. I put the screen shots in there and I am glad I did just as a back up to show you a bit of that. And just to show you a little bit. You know, how we can work with a distance learning environment from the perspective of the instructor and the administrator. Monitoring how that individuals doing, and then just as a brief review, showing how you can assign curriculum. You can always just assign (incomprehensible) but to make it more relevant,

for that individual or that client, if they have an interest in becoming a medical assistant or a particular job area, you can assign curriculum based on that. An just a little bit of the delivery on that, there, of the curriculum itself, in which we want to take things on an incremental basis, go step by step, and then importantly for a distance learning environment perspective, where I could not show that, or I could not show the sound you could not hear the sound but you can turn on the sound so that individual has a real personality, you can speak to them, you can turn the internet on or off, and in addition to that, when they get problems wrong, ideally, it would be nice to have somebody there as a tutor, giving them different guidance, but we do have that pop that window you know that demonstrates, hey you got this wrong, take a look at it like this, and give that individual some coaching on the way. So that is really what we are all about. And I will be hanging around for questions as well. In the meantime, Mr. Butler I appreciate it.

Introduction of Q&A Session

James Butler: Thank you so much Stan, great job. Unfortunately, our fourth and final speaker, Ms. Teresa Wall-MacDonald from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal TANF Program was unable to attend the Webinar. So we are hoping that we might be able to bring her on in one of our upcoming Webinars. With that being said, we can go ahead and open the lines for comments or questions.

Operator: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. If you have questions, please press the 1 followed by the 4 on your telephone. You will hear a three count prompt telling you to (incomprehensible) your request. If your question has been answered and you'd like to withdraw your (incomprehensible), please press the one followed by the three. If you are using speaker phone pleases lift up your handset before answering your request. Once again, if you have questions, please press the 1 followed by the 4. One moment please… And we have no questions from the phone line.

Q&A Session

Louisa Fuller: Okay well actually we have three questions that came through on email. The first was for Sheryl. What was the source of funding for the initial $300,000 mobile unit?

Sheryl: That was a combination of the Workforce Investment Act, allocations, program allocations, and some other non-recurring grant funding. It was just a combination of funds. Different pots of money that we pieced together.

Louisa Fuller: Okay, thank you.

Jennifer McHenry: We also got another question in from the Web. There was a county who is secured construction permit, for a public FM educational radio station. Um, and the question is for Mary initially, something like that would qualify for funding under the community connect rural um, TV grant or telecommunications program. And if not, does she have any suggestions or know if anyone has any suggestions on funding sources.

Mary: So let me understand, it is a request to fund a public TV station or they…

Jennifer McHenry: the FM radio station…

Mary: No our grant program would not cover that. The only thing I can think of is the federal communications commission in my head for funding for something like that.

Louisa Fuller: Okay. And I believe I we actually have a third question and this is actually for Stan. Can the time spent by the client be broken down by date and hours?

Stan: Yeah, that is a good question. Yes you can run a report and you can pick whatever date you would like and download that into an excel spreadsheet. So yeah.

Louisa Fuller: And Stan can you give your contact information one more time in case someone is interested in contacting you for a further demonstration.

Stan: Yeah, that would be great, I would be happy to. I can do a Web cast demonstration as well. And my number here is 877-842-6205. And my email address is just Stan, S-T-A-N at Key Train dot com. So it has just S-T-A-N at K-E-Y-T-R-A-I-N dot com. And I guess I will give you all the number again 877-842-6205. And certainly I would welcome anybody.

Jennifer McHenry: Thanks, we did actually have another question come in and this is for Stan again. The question was if Key Train is used by a client from a remote location, can access to the Internet be limited? So I guess maybe does it have to be a certain level to (incomprehensible) Internet connection speed or is there a (incomprehensible) to sort of connect and module onto a computer to connect if Internet availability is sloppy.

Stan: Okay, we have done some things from a technical standpoint to minimize the bandwidth that is necessary to run key train. We do have people that are running Key Train on a dial up. And the way this works, it has somewhat interesting in the sense where you access this through a browser like through an Internet Explorer. And when you do this there is a little bit of a download so when you are going through the curriculum um your on the Internet but you are not jumping through screen to screen. You are not jumping scene to screen actually self contained. So it has actually downloading a piece of the curriculum onto your computer through the Internet Explorer. See you can click through it pretty quickly, you know, you may have to wait a while or just a little bit if you are in a connection that's really slow um you would have to wait a little while for that piece of curriculum to get to you. And then when you are done and you exit, it actually remembers and then sends all that information back to the server. So um I probably did a poor job explaining that from a technical standpoint, but the neat thing about it is when you know when you are surfing the internet and you click on a link and it waits a little while and then you click on another link and it waits a little while. That download happens all at once. You do not have to wait through every screen which can get a little frustrating but once you have it, you have got it and you can go through that portion of the curriculum uh so it downloads in kind of chunks I should say if that is

non-technical if that should be said. So yeah, you can use it in forms of dialup. It has better if you have a higher speed but it certainly will work. Okay.

Jennifer McHenry: Excellent, thanks. And are there any other questions maybe on the phone line that may have come in?

Operator: No, there are no questions from the phone line.

Jennifer McHenry: Well we'll turn this back over to James.

Closing Remarks (James Butler)

James Butler: Thank you again to the participants for attending this Webinar and thank you to our speakers for sharing their breadth and depth of expertise on rural mobile technology and distance learning. We hope this was beneficial to you and the communities that you serve. A transcript and audio recording of this Webinar will be made available for everyone within the coming weeks. Also, feel free to e-mail anyone on the Rural Communities Initiative team if you have any further questions. On behalf of the Federal Office of Family Assistance, thank you again!