

# THE **TELEWORKER**

A Publication of the Telework Exchange<sup>SM</sup>

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## Telework Can Boost National Security



Teleworking often is viewed as a benefit solely for the employee, providing reduced commuting time, better work-life balance, increased productivity, and other perks.

But how many consider telework as a key component to our collective national preparedness, or even, improved national security? More and more people do, according to an increasing number of government advocates — among them, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Congressmen Frank Wolf and Tom Davis, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the General Services Administration (GSA). But this is not a new topic of interest among these agencies and individuals. Telework has long been viewed as an essential element for operational continuity.

Recent events are a reminder of the need for contingency planning across government organizations. Hurricanes along the Gulf Coast and in Florida have put Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans to the test for many Federal, state, and local agencies. These events have reminded others of the need to conduct COOP exercises to prepare for disruptions in critical infrastructure and mission accomplishment. More than ever, telework is a viable option for Federal agencies' COOP plans.

To take a step back, the 1998 Presidential Decision Directive 67 mandated that all agencies must have COOP plans in place by October 1999. To aid the agencies in developing these programs and plans, FEMA released a document to guide them — Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) 65. In

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## Telework Study Shows Hard Numbers, Offers Up Hope

A new study sponsored by Intel Corporation shows, in real terms, just how detrimental our culture of the “five-days-a-week commute” can be to our lives and our planet. But the same study offers hope by confirming that telework can improve the current situation — it can save our sanity, our environment, and even some impressive amounts of money.

Released November 16, the study, titled “Federal Telework: No Free Ride,” surveyed approximately 3,500 Federal government employees registered as

**In one year, what could you do with an hour a day?**

**Get Healthy**

- *Train for a marathon*
- *Lose 60 pounds*
- *Learn a new sport*

**Get Smart**

- *Earn an MBA 35% faster*
- *Learn a foreign language*
- *Read 25 books*

**Get Organized**

- *Clean out 83 closets*
- *Re-organize your garage 31 times*



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# Home Office — Make Telework Your New Year's Resolution

There is no time like the new year to make changes, and there is certainly no better time to re-tool or equip your home office with the latest technology for 2006. Conditions for this “telework/home office audit” are ideal: vendors offer deep discounts, the technology is readily available, and teleworking has become a necessity for government agencies.

Buying technology is not as daunting as some might think. The average teleworker does not need more than the fundamentals: a desktop or laptop computer, secure Internet connectivity, a printer, and a phone line.

If you are a current or retired government employee, you probably qualify to purchase technology products under a government employee purchasing program. A number of vendors who provide computers, printers, and other peripheral equipment offer competitive prices to civilian government and military employees for home use. Check vendor Web sites or ask before you buy. These offers may not apply to all products, but can deliver substantial discounts to qualified current and former government employees.

**Desktop or Laptop.** Today's laptops perform as well as larger desktops. If you are looking for mobility between home, office, and travel, a laptop is the

way to go — and you can enjoy mobility within your house, too, through a wireless network setup. Not limited to the home, you can work on your laptop at a local Internet cafe and other public wireless hot spots.

**Wireless Network.** More and more Americans rely on wireless networks to enable multiple users and locations for computing in and around their homes. A range of wireless modems is available — most under \$100. Wireless networks often require additional security measures, such as encryption options to ensure online privacy. Consult with your IT department to be sure you are operating and connecting to your office network securely.

**Printer.** Considering the reasonable price point and flexibility, teleworkers should consider a multi-function machine — you can print, fax, copy, and scan using one machine. Not only do these multi-function devices take up less space, they also equate to fewer pieces of technology that may need repair and troubleshooting. For printing, most teleworkers will be happy with an inkjet printer — the print quality is good for both text and color images. Laser printers still have their place though, especially if you regularly need to print multi-page documents quickly.

**Internet Connectivity.** For Internet and e-mail access, and to easily deal with large datasets, text files, or imagery, either a cable modem or DSL connection is the choice. With these connection types, you are “always” connected and file transfer speed is very quick. Both are very reliable, and costs are comparable. Naturally, you will need to work with your IT department to ensure secure communications meet your agency requirements for network access.

## What are the savings in a “Purchase Program?”

*Often, between 2-12% savings, depending on the products and level of service you choose.*

*Great deals on peripherals and accessories (batteries, printers, handhelds, multimedia, etc).*

*From laptops to desktops, there are discounts on most home computing products.*

Many agencies use “virtual private networks” (VPN), or other secure communications channels, and may have specific recommendations for the optimal type of connection for your remote work requirements.

**Phone Communications.** Many teleworkers choose to use their home phone as their business phone while teleworking, forwarding their office phone lines to their home numbers. Others prefer a second phone line dedicated to business. A traditional second line can be expensive, especially once you tack on services like caller ID, voice mail, and call waiting. These days, increasing numbers of teleworkers use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) as a cheaper alternative. VoIP technology, in a nutshell, is a way to use your Internet connection — cable modem or DSL — as a phone line. This technology, now widely available, is less expensive than a traditional line, and still functions as a phone even when you are working online.

**Technical Support.** We all know how it feels to finally finish a document, only to have the system seize up and swallow it whole. What kind of help do teleworkers rely on when they need technical support? Most call their department's designated help desk. During the initial setup of your



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## Telework Can Boost National Security

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this original 1999 FPC, there was no mention of teleworking.

Not until 2001, in its FPC 67, did FEMA offer this suggestion to COOP planners: “Maximum use should be made of existing field infrastructures and other options, such as telecommuting locations, work-at-home, virtual offices, joint, or shared facilities.” With the tragic events of September 11, 2001 as an impetus, FEMA updated the original FPC 65 in 2004 to include an entire annex on human capital planning — and telework is recommended as one of the flexibilities managers should consider when designing their organizational COOP plan.

### “COOP: A Wake Up Call” Study

*A December 2005 study released by the Telework Exchange and Citrix reveals challenges in Federal agencies’ COOP preparedness.*

*Results indicate:*

*45% of respondents do not have guidance on how to respond to a man-made or natural disaster*

*40% of respondents note their agency is not prepared to continue business operations in the wake of a disaster*

Even before the era of heightened terrorist threats, OPM’s Federal Interagency Telework Working Group issued a 2001 “Continuity of Operations Program” final report, which recommends: “Agencies should utilize their COOP authorities and experiences to familiarize the entire workforce with the advantages and effectiveness of working at a remote location.”

Agencies should incorporate telework options into their COOP plans and assure that managers and employees are aware of this option in the event of an emergency.

OPM reiterated these recommendations in its May 2003 Telework Manual, which began by declaring telework to be integral in agency Continuity of Operations planning. “Telework allows the Federal government to remain responsive to the nation at all times.” This manual still provides basic guidance,



and OPM remains an advocate for including telework in COOP plans.

While FEMA has the overall responsibility for ensuring adequate COOP plans are in place for Federal government agencies, the agency now partners with OPM to offer human capital-oriented COOP instruction. Using a train-the-trainer approach, FEMA had provided education sessions in each of its 10 U.S. regions as of mid-2005. The FEMA courses include an OPM segment on the different human capital tools available to ensure continued operations during a crisis. That segment points to telework as an important tool for emergency planners in a COOP-related event.

Telework has the attention of members of Congress as well. Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) agrees that “telework is not just common-sense efficiency, but an important national security consideration. The decentralization of Federal agency functions inherent in a healthy telework strategy can greatly increase the survivability of those agencies in the event of a terrorist attack or other disruptive crisis.”

In Congressional testimony in April 2005, GAO and OPM stressed the importance of Federal government involvement in telework. Linda Koontz, Director of Information Management Issues at GAO, testified that, “Telework is an important and viable option for Federal agencies in COOP planning and implementation efforts, especially as the duration of an emergency event is extended.”

OPM Director for Human Capital Leadership and Merit System Accountability, Marta Brito Pérez, confirmed the agency’s goal is to make telework an integral part of operations. “I assure you that OPM will continue to champion telework as a key human capital strategy and do everything possible to facilitate its incorporation into

agency overall operations and emergency preparedness planning and use.”

A COOP plan also is useful for times when, although not necessarily an emergency, there is an unexpected interruption or disruption in government operations. Billy Michael, a Senior Telework Program Analyst at GSA’s Office of Governmentwide Policy, notes that teleworking already has been used effectively to continue business as usual in some Washington, D.C. government offices. “During large scale protests and other disruptive activities in the city, agencies have encouraged eligible employees to telework,” he says.

The private sector can offer strategic advice for government plans. Tom Simmons, Area Vice President, Government Systems, Citrix Systems, sponsor of the December 2005 study, “COOP: A Wake Up Call,” says, “the Federal government must increase awareness of and education in business continuity plans for employees, in addition to adopting telework as a contingency plan in COOP. Telework is a practical option to ensure business continuity.”

Please visit [www.teleworkexchange.com](http://www.teleworkexchange.com) for resources on COOP planning and teleworking.

### Government’s Next Steps in Examining COOP Plans

*GAO plans to release a report on alternative facilities in April 2006. It will be made public within 30 days after submission. “This report will also provide an update on the extent to which agencies have made the necessary preparations to use telework in COOPs.”*

*— Linda Koontz, Director of Information Management Issues, GAO*

# GSA Telework Program Analyst Sets the Example

Nearly 75 percent of employees telework in the Office of Real Property Management, Office of Government-wide Policy (OGP), General Services Administration (GSA). To accommodate this flexible work strategy, the department has a shared office space — called “the café” — for those working in the office on a periodic basis.



“It’s a sort of ‘hot desking’ situation,” says Billy Michael, a Senior Telework Program Analyst with OGP. “We have a couple desktop computers that we share, and there are docking stations for laptops.” Of course, the café has phones, a conference room, a small kitchen, and other necessities. But Michael uses this space only about two or three times each month.

The rest of the time, he works from his home in Gaithersburg, Maryland. His teammates are scattered across the Washington Metropolitan area, some working from home and others from GSA-funded Federal Telework Centers. “But we’re constantly connected and communicating,” says Michael.

The team stays in touch through a few key mechanisms. Although there’s

## Ask Dr. Telework

**Q:** *I work for a state government, and I currently telework one day a week. Although I’ve been trying to convince my management that I would be more productive and my quality of work would increase by teleworking more, my management does not yet see the value. Do you have any tips for potential state and local teleworkers?*

**A:** *In most state telework policies, there are no barriers to teleworking more than one day a week. In this case, perhaps a disconnect exists between you and your supervisor. The first step to overcoming these issues is to define them and understand the current policy. It is recommended that you check with your human resources manager to determine if your agency has policies that would prevent teleworking additional days per week. It might also be helpful to work with your supervisor to understand exactly why additional telework is viewed with reluctance and to determine if a specific plan can be designed to address pending concerns.*

A few state-related sites about teleworking and improving commutes:

**Arizona** - [www.teleworkarizona.com](http://www.teleworkarizona.com)

**California** - [www.dpa.ca.gov/telework/teleworkmain.shtm](http://www.dpa.ca.gov/telework/teleworkmain.shtm)

**Georgia** - [www.gms.state.ga.us/employee/telework.asp](http://www.gms.state.ga.us/employee/telework.asp)

**North Carolina** - <http://teleworking.osp.state.nc.us>

**Oregon** - <http://egov.oregon.gov/ENERGY/TRANS/Telework/telehm.shtm>

**Virginia** - [www.teleworkva.org](http://www.teleworkva.org)

**Washington** - [www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm/)

**Washington, D.C.** - [www.mwco.org/commuter/ccindex.html](http://www.mwco.org/commuter/ccindex.html)

**Q:** *Viruses and spyware are a huge problem on personal computers these days. What is the best way for government agencies to protect themselves from being infected by viruses introduced by remote users? If I get a virus while working at home, how far could that spread?*

**A:** *Because a virus from a home computer can quickly spread throughout the entire agency network once connected, this is an excellent question. In addition to having a general security policy about not opening unknown e-mail attachments and not downloading software from unfamiliar Web sites, technology can help here.*

*As remote users connect to the network, today’s technology can check their PCs or laptops to make sure they are secure and protected from viruses before they are allowed onto the network, both protecting the network and letting the user know if there is a security problem with their machine. — Don Wheeler, Solutions Marketing Manager at Juniper Networks*

Each issue of *The Teleworker* will highlight a question or two from the Web site’s Water Cooler. To see other topics, ask questions, or share with your peers, visit the Water Cooler on [www.teleworkexchange.com](http://www.teleworkexchange.com).

## GSA Telework Program Analyst Sets the Example

nothing high-tech about it, the most important tool is a daily or weekly update. "Our protocol is to send out a regular message to our associates, letting them know where we are and what our schedule is," says Michael. He noted that even his appointment to meet *The Teleworker* for this article was on his schedule for the team to see.

Other traditional collaboration tools keep the team connected too — e-mail, conference calls, and mobile phones. Michael calls these tools invaluable for "quick huddles." They also make use of Web-based meeting software when a situation calls for a more structured collaborative approach, with formal presentations and virtual white board capabilities.

A long-term fan and advocate of telework, Michael has been working from home for seven years with GSA. Before that, he worked on telework policy at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). He credits his GSA supervisor, Stan Kaczmarczyk, for being a flexible and

supportive manager. "He is a senior executive, and he teleworks too," says Michael. "Our performance is measured on the same criteria as others who do not telework, and Stan has no issues with our team's teleworking arrangements. We are easy to reach, our teamwork is effective, and our customers are happy."

Working from home also has boosted Michael's confidence in technology — a real benefit of teleworking that is not so commonly mentioned. "When you're in the office and your computer is acting quirky, your first reaction is to call the

help desk," he says. "Then, you most likely wait for someone to come fix the problem — more productivity lost." Michael says he has become more savvy about troubleshooting and fixing routine problems himself when they arise. But he is quick to point out that GSA's help desk is a valuable resource to the agency's teleworkers, and that he still relies on their expertise at times.

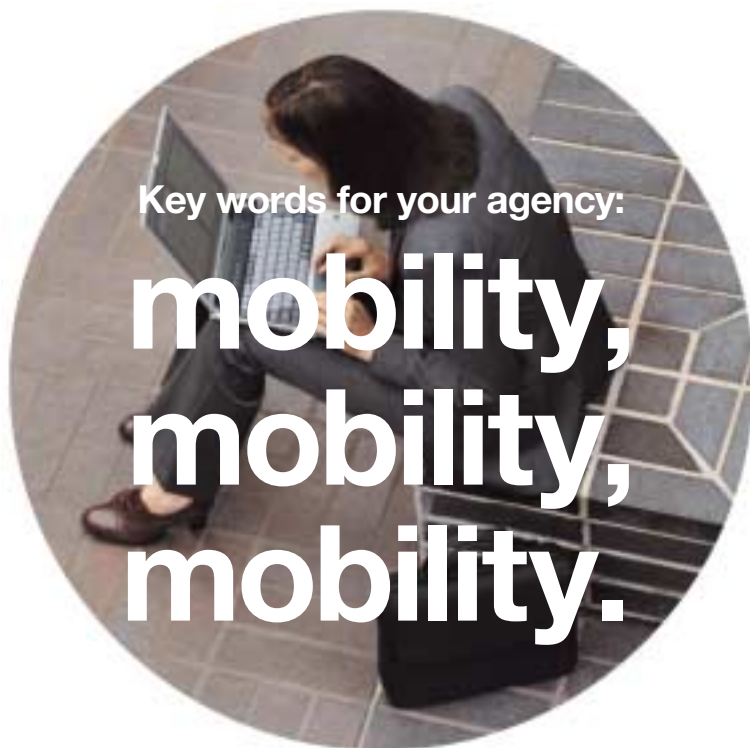
Ask Michael about the downsides to telework, and he can only think of one. "Files are taking over my house," he laughs. "It's more of a work style issue than a teleworking issue. I tend to keep everything. If you gave me a piece of paper two years ago, I probably have it here...somewhere."

### See How It Works

If you want to see how Billy Michael's team accommodates teleworkers and office workers alike, you can request a copy of their CD, "Telework 2004: The Future is Now," through [www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov). Click on "GSA Telework Pages," and fill out the CD order form. The video features Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), GSA leaders, and, of course, several teleworking GSA employees.

### Billy Michael's Home/Mobile Office

- Laptop computer (provided by GSA) with wireless card, for broadband connectivity wherever he travels
- Cable modem for Internet connectivity (provided by GSA)
- All-in-one printer/fax/scanner/copier (personally owned)
- Landline telephone and second phone line (personally owned)
- Mobile phone (provided by GSA)
- Consumable supplies (provided by GSA)



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# Congress Considers Strategies for Alleviating the Effects of High Fuel Prices

## *Wolf, Moran, and Telework Exchange Testify*

On November 16th, the House Committee on Government Reform convened its Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce and Agency Organization to discuss the impact of recent gasoline price increases on the Federal and American workforce. The Subcommittee chairman, Jon Porter (R-NV), invited a diverse group of witnesses to share concerns and recommendations on how to minimize the effects of volatile fuel costs on businesses and their employees across the nation.

Because teleworking factors greatly into this discussion, the Telework Exchange was invited to testify before the Subcommittee. Below is a brief summary of the session; to view full documents from the hearing, visit [www.reform.house.gov/FWAO](http://www.reform.house.gov/FWAO).

**The Honorable Frank Wolf** (R-VA), a recognized and long-standing supporter of telework initiatives, spoke on the many benefits — for the public and private sectors — of expanding telework, including improved air quality, energy conservation, enhanced quality of life and productivity, traffic abatement, and support to Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans. He added that the U.S. government should serve as a “model employer” in demonstrating these benefits. Although Wolf expressed some disappointment in the voluntary participation of Federal government telework programs to date, he also underscored his continuing commitment to encourage improvements across all Federal agencies. He noted that the Securities and Exchange Commission has done an “incredible job” with its telework program.

**The Honorable James Moran** (D-VA) is another long-time advocate of teleworking. He spoke of the urgent need to build redundant capabilities that would allow nearly uninterrupted continuation of government operations in the event of a future incident, threat, or disaster that keeps employees away from their offices.

**The Honorable Tom Davis** (R-VA), Chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, echoed Wolf’s

observations and lamented that the Federal government’s adherence to traditional commuting-to-work models are outmoded — “so 20th Century.” He applauded Wolf’s and Moran’s continued support and collaboration to promote telework across the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. All three Congressmen vowed to continue joint efforts to encourage agency telework programs.



**Daniel Green** of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) stated that the participation by Federal government employees in telework programs is steadily increasing each year, although the numbers are not yet where they should be. To encourage adoption of telework across agencies, OPM conducts training for managers and employees on best practices for effective teleworking, offers Web-based training for participants, and visits agencies to discuss specific departmental requirements and offer telework options. Finally, OPM also co-hosts with GSA the [www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov) site that provides useful resources to support teleworkers and their managers. OPM is charged with collecting statistics and producing an annual report to Congress on telework usage across all executive branch departments.

**The Honorable Eleanor Holmes-Norton** (D-DC) said that given the Federal government’s position as the biggest workforce in the country by far, “our collective responsibility to evaluate the impact of higher fuel prices on the American worker, including possible solutions such as teleworking, represents

an act of great public responsibility.” She noted that we need a better understanding of managers’ and employers’ reluctance to adopting alternate work approaches.

**Daniel Matthews**, Chief Information Officer of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) at the time, noted that some of the DOT’s organizations, such as the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), have more than 50 percent of eligible workers actively participating in its telework program. Given its mission, the DOT is keenly focused on avoiding unnecessary fuel consumption by employees, while delivering the essential agency services without interruption. Matthews said the agency has successfully addressed technical challenges, such as broadband availability and secure communications.

**Tom Calcagni**, Managing Director for Public Relations at the American Automobile Association, told the Subcommittee that individuals can take steps to mitigate the consequences of high fuel prices. He stated that “only 15 percent of daily trips are for commuting” and that many Americans can economize on fuel by limiting discretionary travel and planning travel in more gas-efficient ways.

**Stephen W. T. O’Keeffe**, Executive Director of the Telework Exchange, focused on the effect of high gas prices on the Federal workforce, citing examples from the Telework Exchange “It’s No Gas” study. The gasoline price hikes of September 2005 cost the average Federal employee a real-income salary reduction of approximately \$526, and a 42.6 percent increase in American commuting costs. The Telework Exchange recommends that Federal agencies continue to aggressively pursue telework solutions for all eligible employees. In addition to previously-mentioned benefits, O’Keeffe noted that teleworking options also improve the Federal government’s ability to attract and retain top-notch Generation Y talent, maintain continuity of operations, as well as to reduce fuel consumption and conserve energy.

**William Mularie**, Chief Executive Officer of the Telework Consortium, said, “The fundamental commuter model has to change.” He discussed a number of telework pilot programs that have had promising results for public and private

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# GAO Report Examines Telework Methodologies in Five Government Agencies

## *Finds No Consistency in Eligibility, Awareness, or Measurement*

Five government agencies have once again had their telework programs scrutinized. These agencies already have been highlighted by Congress as organizations needing improvement in making telework options more accessible for eligible employees.

The FY 2006 SSJC Appropriations bill requires the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State; the Small Business Administration (SBA); and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to prove more employees are teleworking or risk losing \$5 million in funding.

### Why these five agencies?

*Congressman Frank Wolf is Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that has jurisdiction over these agencies. As such, he requested that GAO examine their progress on promoting and implementing telework.*

In a September report, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reviewed the agencies' telework methodologies.

The GAO concluded no clear rules exist that define how to determine who is eligible to telework. Nor are there set ways to measure how many eligible employees are taking advantage of teleworking opportunities. The GAO found a range of methods for building awareness among eligible employees —

from internal broadcast e-mails to passive postings on agency Intranets.

The agencies vary in their approaches to managing telework. For example, at SBA and SEC, all positions are eligible for telework, and each employee arrangement is considered individually. At the larger agencies (Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State), workers' telework eligibility is based upon numerous considerations, including position, assignment, and job performance.

The report finds internal system limitations have thwarted department efforts to measure telework participation. One significant constraint has been time and attendance reporting systems that cannot easily enable tracking of actual telework. The Departments of Commerce and Justice are implementing new Web-based time and attendance systems that will provide a way to count actual telework participation beginning sometime in 2006.

Telework participation can grow through effective agency promotion. The report details the different approaches agencies are taking. Some require employee training and written telework agreements, while others are focused on eliminating barriers to telework where practical. The SEC and Department of Justice are taking steps forward by providing management training to help supervisors understand best practices, and how

to identify candidates and manage teleworkers effectively.

The detailed GAO report provides insights that can be used by other government organizations working to expand and refine their telework programs. Several of the GAO observations and recommendations are applicable to many government agencies in support of efforts to make telework programs more consistent, measurable, and effective.

In 2006, GAO will once again review these five agencies, and add two more departments: NASA and the National Science Foundation. All of these organizations fall under the jurisdiction of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, Commerce, and Related Agencies, whose Chair is a telework proponent, Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA).

In an era of high fuel costs, natural disasters, possible health threats such as the avian flu, and the specter of terrorist actions, telework is fast becoming a more attractive option for managers and employees alike. This report sheds light on how several agencies and departments are striving to meet the teleworking mandate and offer this alternative to more of its workforce.

Follow this link for the full report: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d051055r.pdf>

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## Telework Study Shows Hard Numbers, Offers Up Hope

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members of the Telework Exchange. Of those registered, 20 percent are teleworkers, 58 percent are interested in teleworking, and five percent are managers of teleworkers.

First, the study shows the hard-to-swallow numbers about the average Federal employee:

- Spends an average of \$10,580 a year in after-tax commuting costs
- Each disperses approximately eight tons of pollutants into the environment annually
- Invests 245 hours commuting each year
- Typically spends more time commuting than on vacation

Then the findings offer some hope. If that average Federal employee would telework just two days each week, these would be the results:

- Save \$4,372 per year of personal income
- Get 98 hours of their life back to put toward more productive use

- Spare the environment 3.6 tons of pollutants each year

The study proves that such results, and savings, already are being seen by Federal employees registered at the Telework Exchange. Based on the survey's results, these registrants saved a collective \$5,951,906, and in 2005 alone have reduced environmental pollutants by 4,513 tons through teleworking.

Results also remind us that, although interest in teleworking is at an all-time high, there is still ample work to be done in educating Federal employees about teleworking opportunities and strategies. While 56 percent of those interested in teleworking said their agency had a teleworking plan, only 21 percent had access to the plan and only five percent knew the name of their agency telework coordinator.

Federal employees want to telework. America needs to conserve fuel and reduce pollutants. Members of Congress are paying increasing attention to and promoting discussion of telework across the public sector. Hope abounds, and there is no doubt the savings we are seeing in this study's numbers will only increase.

## Congress Considers Strategies for Alleviating Effects of High Fuel Prices

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sector employers in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. The Telework Consortium programs focus on leveraging multi-media telecommunications technologies and strategies to enable telework in diverse work environments.

**Steven Hill**, President of Silver State Materials Corporation, operates a concrete, sand, and gravel supply business in the Subcommittee Chairman's home district of southern Nevada. He discussed the direct cost impact on his business in the greater Las Vegas area. With his need to buy 140,000 gallons of fuel monthly, September's increased prices will cost him an additional \$2.2 million in 2005 alone. This is particularly significant in a fuel-dependent industry where commuting distances are great. There is very little affordable housing near most employment, mass transportation is limited, and many regional industries do not lend themselves to extensive telework options.

## Home Office — Make Telework Your New Year's Resolution

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teleworking technology, your IT department also should provide you with contact information for technical assistance.

And don't forget the substantial technical support offered by most major hardware, software, and telecommunications service providers. For product-specific questions and troubleshooting, this should be your first call or e-mail for help and technical advice.

So, skip the traditional resolutions this year, and resolve to create a better work-life balance through telework. As part of this plan, take a few moments to conduct a "home office audit" to

ensure you are making the most of the technology you have working for you. Consider adding functionality, speed, and capacity to complement your current system — and to make you more productive wherever you work.

*Prices range from budget laptops at \$800 (or even a bit less), to trim and lightweight models at \$1,500 and up. For desktops, you can get a fully loaded machine for \$800 or less, or up to \$3,000 for a speedy, versatile, multimedia workhorse. Printer prices vary wildly, depending on speed and print quality: from as low as \$100 to \$700 and up for more sophisticated laser printer models.*